

PRINCE UBBELY BUBBLE'S NEW STORY BOOK



WITH ILLUSTRATIONS.



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PRINCE UBBELY BUBBLE ON HIS JOURNEY.

[*Frontispiece.*]

PRINCE UBBELY BUBBLE'S NEW STORY BOOK.



The Dragon all covered with Spikes,

The Long-Tailed Nag,



The Three One-Legged Men,



The Old Fly and the
Young Fly,

Tom and the Ogre,



AND OTHER TALES.

By J. TEMPLETON LUCAS.

With Numerous Illustrations

BY

BARNES, BRUNTON, BARNARD, CONCANEN, W. LUCAS, MATT. MORGAN, PHIZ,
J. E. SODEN, GORDON THOMSON, AND THE AUTHOR.

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THE COBBLER'S SON	1	<i>Thomson.</i>
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THE BLACK-BEETLES	1	<i>J. T. Lucas.</i>
THE GREAT GENERAL	2	<i>J. E. Soden.</i>
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THE SIX GOBLIN EGGS	1	<i>J. T. Lucas.</i>
THE DRAGON ALL COVERED WITH SPIKES	1	<i>Brunton.</i>
THE LONG-TAILED NAG	1	<i>J. T. Lucas.</i>

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TOM AND THE OGRE	1	<i>Barnes.</i>
THE THREE ONE-LEGGED MEN	2	<i>Concanen.</i>
THE PIMPLE ON A NOSE	1	<i>Matt. Morgan.</i>
THE QUARRELSOME CHICKEN	1	<i>J. T. Lucas.</i>

PRINCE UBBELY BUBBLE'S NEW STORY BOOK.

THE PERSEVERANCE OF PRINCE UBBELY
BUBBLE; OR, EARTH, AIR, FIRE, AND
WATER.

ONCE UPON A TIME, there lived a good King and Queen who had but one son, called Prince Ubbely Bubble; beloved by all the nation because he was kind and good-natured to every one.

Whenever Prince Ubbely Bubble rode out, people bowed and smiled to him, and the little boys took off their hats and hurraed; if they had no hats to put on, of course they could not take them off, so they hurra'ed twice as loudly as those who had, and the Prince bowed and smiled at them all in return. Some folks would say how nice to be a Prince, and so polite; little thinking what hard work it is to bow nine hundred and ninety-nine times in

every hour of the day: but the Prince bowed all the same—it was the only way of showing that he liked to see people; for if he had asked to dinner every one who bowed to him, no room in the Palace would have been large enough.

The people were all very fond of doing just as the Prince did: when he parted his hair in the middle, they did just the same; and any one who parted his on one side was looked upon as a very vulgar person—indeed, it was considered worse to do so than to have no parting at all. The Prince himself was the only one who thought nothing at all about such a trifle, for in truth he had much more important affairs to occupy him.

He knew that as soon as he reached the twenty-first year of his age he would have to start on a journey in search of the Princess who was to be his wife, and the time was not far off. This journey he knew was to be a trouble to him, because he had been told by the King his father, that for one week his bad Genius would share power over him equally with his good Genius, and that there would be strife between the two. The King had learnt all this

from a very wise man, who knew all about what would take place in the future.

There were very grand doings at the Palace when the Prince came of age ; the doors were thrown open, and people flocked from all parts of the country to share in the rejoicings. There was music, dancing, eating, drinking, playing, laughing, talking ; and at night-time a good deal of crying, because on the next day the Prince would have to start on his lonely journey.

When the morrow came, the Prince rose early in the morning, and went to take leave of his father and mother, to receive their blessing and instructions for the journey. The King said to him,—

“ Ubbely Bubble, my child, you are to go to the point where the sun goes down, to turn neither to the right nor to the left, but to go on in a straight line. I know not whither it will lead you, but the Princess whom the Genii have given you will be found at the end of your road. You have but this one thing to remember, that you are to keep the straight road.”

The King and Queen then, with tears in their

eyes, embraced him; and Ubbely Bubble, with a long staff in his hand, a bag for provisions at his side, a cloak to wear at night-time, and a pair of new boots with bright nails in the soles, started off with such good will, that by evening he had walked more than fifty miles.

He stopped in the middle of a beautiful level plain of country, covered with fields of golden corn, which seemed to extend for miles and miles, as far as one could see. The Prince seated himself on a mossy bank, ate his supper, and then waited to see the sun go down, to mark the point where it was last visible. Then he placed his staff on the ground, so that it pointed straight to the west, wrapped his cloak round him, and lay down to sleep.

Ubbely Bubble was so tired by his long walk that he slept more soundly than ever he had done before, till the light of the breaking day awoke him. Up he jumped as fresh as a lark, and ready to proceed on his journey; but presently he rubbed his eyes and pinched himself to try if he was awake; for the whole face of the country was changed, and the beautiful level plain of golden corn was rising

and falling like the waves of the sea, with a motion that became greater every minute.

The poor Prince trembled; for he knew that his bad Genius was at work, and that unless some other power came to his assistance he would never reach his journey's end. So he fell on his knees, and called aloud, "O my good Genius, what shall I do? my staff points to the west, but I cannot walk while the earth is rising and falling." Then the Prince heard a loud voice, which seemed to come from a great distance, saying these words: "Foolish Prince, look around you; the road to the right is not moving. Continue your journey, and all will be well."

The Prince knew not what to think, for he remembered his father's instructions; so once more he called out, "O good Genius, I must not take the road to the right; for the sun does not go down in that direction. Help me, good Genius, or I shall never find my Princess." Then the voice came again from the distance: "Foolish Prince, there is another road lying on your left hand; it is better even than that upon your right: proceed by it, and you will prosper."

The Prince was troubled by this answer, and was inclined to take the road to the left; but he remembered his father's instructions: so once again he called aloud, "O good Genius, the sun goes down straight in front of me, not on the left, nor on the right: what shall I gain if I take either of these other roads? for my Princess lives where the sun goes down."

Then there came another loud voice from high in the air, and these are the words that it uttered:

"Wise young Prince. For one day, you are safe, and for one day I can help you. It is your bad Genius that has been speaking to you; and had you gone to the right or to the left, you would have perished. Your enemy cannot injure you himself, neither can I myself assist you; but we can both call once upon each of the Elements to act for your good or your harm. Your bad Genius has appealed to Earth for your injury; I cannot stop the moving of the earthquake, but I will call upon Water to help you."

As the Genius spoke, Water came rushing in from all sides, and soon the country before the

Prince was one vast lake of still blue water. Then he heard the voice of his good Genius :

“Ubbely Bubble, spread your cloak upon the water, and stand upon it ; push with your staff, and you will glide on. Farewell, for this day nothing can injure you.”

The Prince was rejoiced to be once more on his road, and found that the cloak carried him beautifully ; the pushing with the staff was rather hard work for his arms, but it was a good rest for his legs ; and by night-time he had gone at least another fifty miles on his road to the place where the sun goes down : so he thought it best to lie down on his cloak, and go to sleep. This he did, after taking his supper and carefully placing his staff so that it pointed to the west.

In the morning the Prince awoke quite cold and numbed, so much so that he could scarcely move or open his eyes. “Ah !” thought he, “this comes from sleeping in the open air without my cloak wrapped around me. I must be up and moving ;” so he arose as briskly as he could, seized hold of his staff, and pushed as hard as possible ; but the cloak would

not move,—for the simple reason that all the water was frozen into ice. “Well,” thought the Prince, “this is the work of the evil Genius; but I won’t be beaten if I can help it. I will walk if I cannot ride on my cloak;” and picking up his staff, he stepped on to the ice; but it was so very slippery, and the nails on his boots were so smooth and polished, that he was unable to stand, and was forced to crawl just like a cat or a dog. He tried to take off his boots, and walk in his stockings; but his fingers were too numbed by the cold to untie the fastenings. “Never mind,” said Ubbely Bubble to himself, “I won’t be beaten; the Genii help those who help themselves.” So he crawled on quite contentedly for several miles, when his knees became so tender and blistered that he could go no farther, but was obliged to sit still on the cold ice.

The good Genius then took pity upon him, and called out from the distance,—

“Courage, Ubbely Bubble! my enemy and yours has called upon the Air to freeze the Water, and I will call upon Earth to help you. Presently you shall

continue your journey in safety for one day more. Farewell."

As the Genius ceased speaking, a cloud of fine sand came sailing along, and fell gently on the ice, covering it to the thickness of an inch; and Ubbely Bubble was able to walk upon it as comfortably as if it had been a Turkey carpet. By evening he had gone another fifty miles, and having eaten his supper, lay down upon the sand to sleep, with his staff pointing to the west.

Morning came, and the Prince awoke to find that he was no longer upon ice, and that the water had all disappeared; but he could scarcely breathe, and could not see at all, while he felt as hot as if he were in an oven.

"This is some new trick of my evil Genius," thought the Prince; "but I will do my best to continue my journey. The good Genius helped me yesterday, and perhaps he may do the same to day." So he groped about until he touched his staff, which lay beside him, pointing to the west, and carefully holding it in a straight line, walked on; but he was so weak and tired that he had not gone more than a

mile in the first hour, when once more the voice of his good Genius thus encouraged him :

“Ubbely Bubble, our enemy has called upon Fire to raise a smoke, so that you cannot see your road; I will call upon Air to blow it away, and you will be safe for another day. Farewell.”

As the Genius spoke, so it happened. The cool fresh air soon revived the Prince, and by evening he had gone another fifty miles of the road to the place where the sun goes down. He ate his supper, pointed his staff to the west, and was soon fast asleep.

When the Prince awoke the next morning, the air was thick with mist, which wetted him to the skin, and made his eyes smart so that he could not keep them open. He dared not move, for only a blind man could have found his way without seeing; so he called his good Genius to help him once more.

Said the Genius, “Ubbely Bubble, the salt-mist, which our enemy has called upon Water to raise from the sea, shall now be dispelled, if Fire will answer my call. Then go on your journey, safe

for another day, and free of the Elements for your life. Henceforth Earth, Air, Fire, and Water will never harm you."

When the Genius ceased, the mist gradually melted away; and the Prince, picking up his staff, continued his road to the place where the sun goes down, pointed his staff to the west, and was soon fast asleep.

When he awoke, it was darker than ever—in fact, as dark as night—and he found himself lying in a most uncomfortable position, with something large wrapped around him, covering him up entirely. He was terribly alarmed to hear the voice of the bad Genius calling from the distance, "Now I defy you, my enemy. I have called upon Things Large to aid me, and to stop your Prince's journey; he is tied safely in Monolog's handkerchief.—There is no bigger giant than he, and no one else is strong enough to untie the knot."

"True," answered the good Genius, "I cannot find a giant greater than Monolog; but I will call upon Things Small to help the Prince, who shall soon be on his journey again."

“ Monolog fears no living thing,” said the evil Genius. “ He has an armour of proof, and a club of iron.”

ATCHEW ! A TICHEW ! TCHEW !

It was the giant sneezing, and Ubbely Bubble trembled as he heard it; for he thought, “ If the giant wishes to use his pocket-handkerchief, what will become of me ? ”

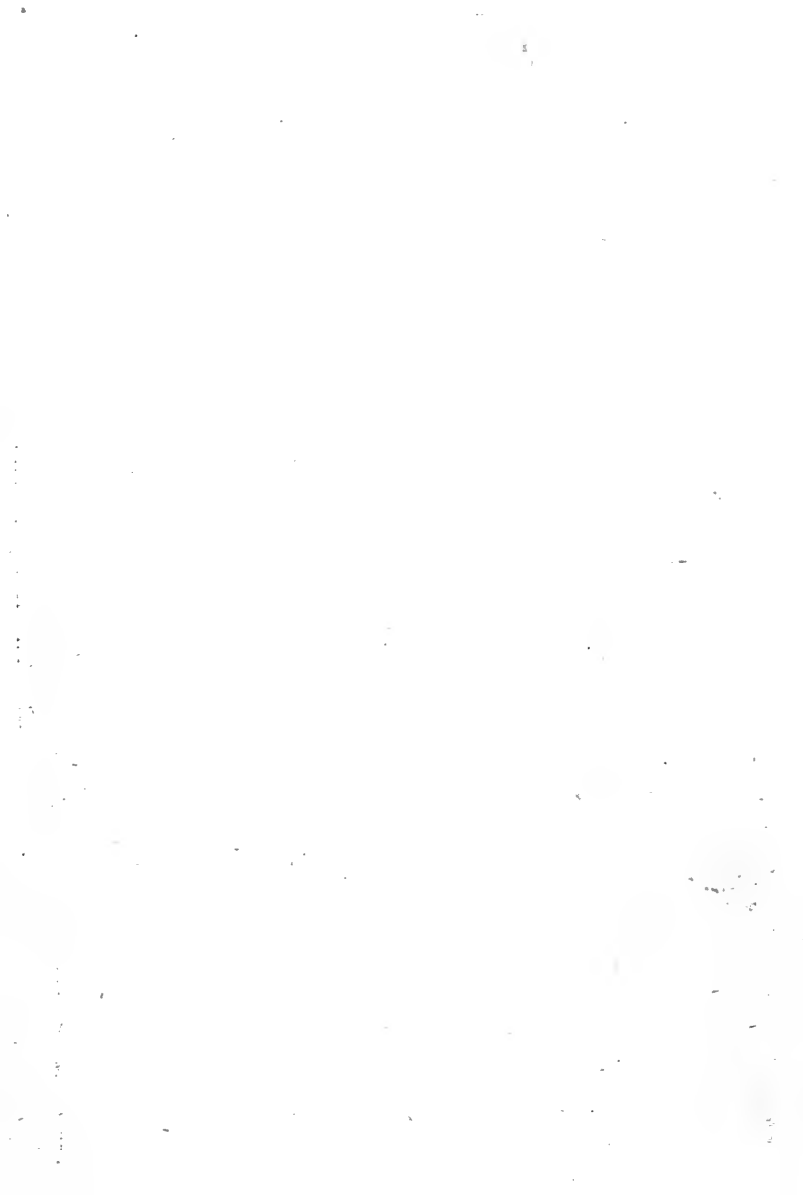
ATCHEW ! A TICHEW ! TCHEW !

The giant sneezing again. The good Genius had caused a small gnat to sting the giant’s nose.

ATCHEW ! A TICHEW ! TCHEW !

This time the giant could stand it no longer, so he untied the knot in the handkerchief, put Ubbely Bubble on the ground, and blew his nose so loudly that the earth shook with the noise.

“ HUM ! ” said Monolog ; that was his way of expressing satisfaction. He was all right again, and looked at Ubbely Bubble as if he had half a mind to put him back in the handkerchief.





MONOLOG AND THE ARMY OF FROGS.

“Hither come Things Small to do you battle,” cried the voice of the good Genius. “Monolog, prepare to die.”

“HUM!” said the giant, signifying that he did not intend to do so.

Ubbely Bubble looked, and beheld an army of frogs, hopping six abreast, and coming straight to the giant; each frog was in full armour, and the frog in command rode on a white rat.

“Halt!” cried the officer, “Stand on your hind legs;” and all the frogs did so. “Stand on your front legs;” and all the frogs did so. “Stand on one hind leg—Stand on one front leg,” which all the frogs had no sooner done, than out came the order, “Stand on one hind and one front leg.” As soon as they had done this, the officer made them do it all over again, and then they were quite ready to begin the battle.

HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! HA!

HA! HA! HA!

The giant was laughing at the idea of having to fight an army of frogs; and stooping down his face to the earth, he blew with his mouth, and so sent

hundreds of them flying. But the commander frog, on his white rat, leaped at the giant's face, and struck him in the eye with his sword; which so enraged Monolog, that he seized the poor little warrior, opened his mouth, and swallowed him whole. The army of frogs fled as fast as they could hop, and the giant began to turn and twist about, coughing and spluttering in a most extraordinary manner. A stream of blood came from his mouth, and after a few struggles he fell on his back, kicked his legs convulsively, said,

“HUM!”

and died. The steel spurs of the poor commanding frog had pricked a vein in the giant's throat, and so Things Small conquered Things Large.

Ubbely Bubble saw all this as he sat on the ground. He waited a few moments to make quite sure that Monolog was dead, and then jumped up to continue his journey; but before he went on he just climbed on to the giant's face, and looked into his mouth, because he fancied that he heard a faint voice calling him, and it seemed to come from that

quarter. He looked down the giant's throat, and saw the bright eyes of the commander frog twinkling and shining.

"So you are not dead, little frog," said the Prince.

"No, my Prince, I am not dead; but I can't get out of the giant's throat, for my spurs are stuck fast; please to pull me out, or I shall die."

Ubbely Bubble did as the frog wished, shook hands with him, and started off on his road as fast as he could go. He went fifty miles, and at night-time lay down to sleep as before, with his staff pointing to the west.

On the morning of the last day of the week, when Ubbely Bubble awoke, his good Genius was standing by his side in the form of an old man of benevolent countenance, dressed in flowing white robes, which shone in the sun. He smiled upon the Prince, and said,—

"Ubbely Bubble, my Prince, I have not feared for you until to-day, and even now I hope that all will be well, and that to-morrow you will see your Princess, and take her back to your father's country. Your evil Genius is now preparing for our last

trial of skill, and I know not what form it will take."

"That you shall know at once," called out a voice behind the Prince, who turned and beheld his evil Genius, clothed in garments as black as his own horrible face. "That you shall know at once. You shall answer my riddles, and I will answer yours—the first who fails to give an answer within the time that the Prince counts ten, shall acknowledge himself beaten. If I fail, the Prince wins his Princess; if you fail, he loses her."

"Begin at once," said the good Genius.

Then said the evil Genius,—

"What living thing is that, which grows with a root, but has no trunk, branches, or leaves?"

The good Genius waited a moment or two, and Ubbely Bubble began slowly to count, *one—two—three—four—five*, as slowly as he could: then the Genius gave the answer—A HAIR.

The Prince clapped his hands, and shouted, "Huzza! one to us. Now, good Genius, for your first riddle—let it be a hard one, I pray you."

"What is that which once filled can never be

emptied, though all the world may take all that it contains?"

Ubbely Bubble began to count as fast as possible, *one-two-three-four-five-six-seven-eight-nine*, but before he could say *ten* the evil Genius was ready with the answer—A BOOK.

Ubbely Bubble looked sad, and waited to hear the next question from his enemy:

“What is that which one person cannot make perfect, and ceases to exist as soon as it is complete?”

One—two—three—four—five—six—seven—eight—nine, and out came the answer just in time—A KISS.

“Now, good Genius, for a good riddle; I’m sure you’ll win,” said poor Ubbely Bubble.

After a little thought the good Genius said,—

“Answer, my enemy, which of us two will win the trial?”

One-two-three-four-five-six-seven-eight-nine-TEN, as fast as possible, and Ubbely Bubble was safe.

The evil Genius hung his head, and vanished.

Ubbely Bubble, thanking his good Genius, who smiled upon him, started off as fast as he could go

in a straight line for the place where the sun goes down—travelled his usual distance, and went to sleep.

In the morning he was awakened by hearing sweet voices singing,—

“ Alley-boo, Alley-boo,
 What shall we do ?
 The Prince is sleeping, although it is light :
 If singing won't wake him,
 We'll take him and shake him,
 And then we shall make him wake up in a fright.
 There's nothing but trouble,
 For Ubbely Bubble,
 Nothing but trouble, from morning till night.”

Ubbely Bubble did not require calling twice, but opened his eyes wide, and saw a number of lovely young women, who beckoned to him, and pointed to a beautiful gate of white marble with four divisions. On the first was written,—

“ If Earth you do not fear,
 You soon shall enter here.”

On the second were these words,—

“ Let no other dare,
Than he who fears not Air.”

On the third was written,—

“ Beware my dreadful ire,
If you're afraid of Fire.”

And on the fourth these words appeared,—

“ He takes the King's own daughter,
Who has no dread of Water.”

“ Well, I am free of the Elements, so I have nothing to fear !” So saying, the Prince pushed at the gate, which opened, and admitted him to a garden full of the most exquisite flowers, which scented the air with various sweet odours. The young maidens tripped on before him, and led the way to a golden grotto in the centre of the garden, the entrance to which was stopped by a wicket fast locked. The Prince examined the lock, and saw these words written upon it,—

“ Monolog, Monolog, almost dumb,
Say one word, and in you come !”

“Oh!” thought the Prince, “that means Hum!”

So he said “Hum!” and the wicket was opened by—whom do you think? Why, by the Princess Alley-boo herself, who walked straight up to him and gave him a kiss. The Prince gave her another, and was delighted to see that Alley-boo was handsome and good-tempered. He told her all about his journey, and the wonderful adventures he had had, which interested her very much. She told him how the good Genius had taken care of her ever since she had been a child, and had promised her a handsome young Prince for a husband.

You may be sure they had a good deal to talk about, but they lost no time in starting for the country where the Prince’s father was king. They rode back in fine style, each on a grand horse with velvet trappings, while the lovely maidens followed behind; and the marriage was arranged for the day after their return.

The King and Queen were very pleased with their new daughter Alley-boo, and invited all the world to the wedding. Earth, Air, Fire, and Water were there, and so was the commanding frog

on his white rat. The good Genius gave away the bride, who looked more charming than red and white roses, so the people said ; and all the nation rejoiced because Ubbely Bubble had found so good a wife.

THE OLD FLY AND THE YOUNG FLY.

ONCE UPON A TIME, there was an old fly of great wisdom and experience, who had lived so long that he had quite forgotten when he was born. This old fly had been well educated by his parents, (a highly respectable couple of old blue-bottles, who had been dead some time previous to the date of my story,) and as he had spent all his life in the pursuit of knowledge he was very much looked up to by other flies. Any one may learn a great deal that is useful in a single lifetime ; but this old fly of whom I am speaking, had lived through two whole summers. The gentleman in whose house he lived, had kept very warm fires burning all through the days and some of the nights of winter, and the consequence was, that the fly, who would have died if he had felt the cold, woke up one fine morning

in spring, after a sleep of nearly five months, as strong and healthy as ever. It is true that at first he felt so drowsy and foolish that he nearly tumbled off the edge of the red curtain in which he had been snugly tucked up; but as soon as the stiffness in the joints of his wings and legs had gone off, he was really as well as before his long sleep. When the days became warmer, and the sun shone more brightly, other little flies began to appear; and as these poor things were young and inexperienced in the ways of the world, the old fly would often teach them how to escape the many dangers they were likely to meet with. Many a young fly soon knew all the horrors connected with a jug of milk, and learnt to avoid sipping cream as a good boy avoids doing wrong, remembering the dreadful tales the old fly used to tell, of whole families being destroyed in a single hour by one bowl of new milk in the dairy. Who knew better than the old fly where the fiercest and ugliest spiders dwelt? and who had had more narrow escapes than the old fly himself? So no one's opinion was better worth having than his, especially on the subject of spiders.

But I am sorry to say that some of the younger flies were very thoughtless, and *would* go near the webs ; so it is not to be wondered at, that sometimes when they were chasing each other about the corners of the room, one or two of them fell victims to their carelessness, and were caught by the spiders.

One morning the old fly was resting on the edge of a window frame, when a young fly came to him and said,—

“ Good day to you, Blue-Bottle! this room is very small and very hot; let us fly out into the open air, and see what we shall see.”

“ Why, you foolish young fly,” said the old one, “ how are we to get through this glass window? and how should we find our way back again, if we could go ? ”

“ Ah ! ” said the young one, “ you call me foolish, but you evidently don't understand what I mean. I know as well as you do, that we can't get through the glass window, but we *can* go through the beautiful golden door, and fly over that green field, past the old man and woman talking outside the cottage, and so on to the blue mountains in the distance.”

“Sir,” said the old fly, in a severe tone of voice, for he was really angry with the young fly, “learn to respect your elders—know that that which you call a golden doorway, I call a picture frame, and the mountains are only blue paint.”

“Oh! indeed, that’s very likely: a mountain must be a mountain, and can’t be anything else; perhaps you will say the old woman and man talking together are paint as well.”

“Yes, my young friend, the gentleman in whose house we live is a painter, and that is one of his pictures. The mountains, the man and woman, the green field, and the cottage, are all paint.”

“Now I know you are not speaking the truth,” said the young fly; “for I can see smoke coming out of the cottage chimney. You are only trying to frighten me, and I shall be off to the mountains.”

So saying, the young fly just rubbed his eyes and wings two or three times with his front legs, as you have often seen flies do, jumped off the window frame, and flew straight for the blue mountains. Alas! alas! that I should have to tell it, two of his legs and one wing were caught in the wet paint, and

there he remained till the painter returned to look at his picture, who, taking him off with his palette knife, soon put an end to his misery. As for the old fly, he cried all night, and ate scarcely any food for several days after.





THE KNIGHT AND THE DAME.

BLANCHE OF CRAIGENHAME.

ONCE UPON A TIME, the young knight Sir Ralph, tired with hunting, sat down to rest beside a running stream; his dog Roy was as fatigued as his master, and lay beside him wagging his tail, partly to show how pleased he was, and partly to frighten away the flies. They were just dozing off to sleep—the pair of them—when an old woman, with long white hair which almost hid her face, came to the stream to fill her pitcher; but the banks were steep, and she could not reach the water. Sir Ralph jumped up and helped her, for which she was very thankful, and asked the young knight if he had a wife.

“If you are not married,” she said, “I think I can tell you of a nice young lady with plenty of money, who would very likely have you.”

"Thank you," replied the knight; "but money goes for nothing unless she is beautiful."

"Oh, she is beautiful, I am told, and so I believe, although I have never seen her myself."

"So she is young, rich, and beautiful. But is she good?" asked Sir Ralph.

"Folks do say *she is*, and I know that she wishes to find a good husband, for to-night she holds high festival at Castle Craighenham; and knights of all degrees will be there to try and win her love. Do you please go there, put on a bold face, and woo the Lady Blanche with the best of them."

"I will go to see the festival," said Sir Ralph; "but I will not promise to woo or to wed."

The woman left the river, and Sir Ralph and his dog dozed off to sleep for the rest of the afternoon.

In the evening-time, Sir Ralph, true to his promise, went to the castle, and joined a crowd of knights who were going the same road. As they reached the outer walls they beheld the old woman with the pitcher seated near the gate, asking for charity. Sir Ralph gave her a golden coin from his purse, but the others passed her by with a care-

less glance as they marched into the great hall of the castle, where stood the golden chair of the Lady Blanche.

For some time the gentlemen waited, and were getting almost tired of standing; but when at last the Lady Blanche took her place on the golden chair, there was a shout of admiration from all. The lady bowed, and bidding them welcome, said that she would hear their suits one by one, and that the *bravest* knight should first be heard.

No sooner had she spoken the words, than such a clamour of tongues arose that not one voice could be heard; for each knight thought himself the bravest.

“Gentlemen, gentlemen,” called out the Lady Blanche, “you are all so brave that I know not how to choose; but if you will wait a while, I will send hither an ancient friend of mine, who will judge for me.”

Saying this, she left her seat, and went from the hall. Soon there entered the old woman who had been begging at the gate, and she seated herself on the golden chair.

“Sir Knight of the golden coin,” exclaimed the ancient dame, “you shall have the Lady Blanche—you, and no other. Come to the front, and stand beside this chair.”

No one moved, and some one cried out, “There is no Knight of the golden coin.”

“Oh, but there is,” said the old woman. “The knight who gave me the golden coin as you all entered to the castle, he is the one.”

Sir Ralph knew that he was the one selected, and stepped to the front, but did not stand beside the chair. Said he to the old woman,—

“I would wed the Lady Blanche; but first I must win her, and I am afraid she may not care to have me.”

Then the old woman raised the thick white hair that hung about her face, and looking at the knights, spoke thus,—

“Should any knight
Dispute my right
To judge as I have done,
To him I state
That the dame at the gate,
And the Lady Blanche, are one.”

Hereupon she threw off her ragged attire and her false white hair, and the Lady Blanche stood before them in her beautiful dress. Then turning to Sir Ralph, she took him by the hand with these words,—

“ Good deeds are like good seeds,
All planted in the ground :
Keep them only clear of weeds,
A harvest will be found.”

“ Sir Ralph of the golden coin, you have wooed and won me ; if you will have me, I am yours for life.”

It is almost needless to add, that the young people were married, and lived very happily together. Sir Ralph's dog Roy was so pleased on the wedding day that he wagged his tail right off.

THE COBBLER'S SON.

ONCE UPON A TIME, there was a poor cobbler who worked from morning till night, and yet could never earn money enough to put by anything to provide for his old age. There was plenty to do, and so there had been for years, but still he was as poor as on the day he started to work for himself. Then he was upright and strong in the legs; now his back was bent from always leaning over his lapstone, and he was too tired with stitching and hammering to care for walking when evening came. Thus it was that he sat and grumbled at his hard lot, till his wife and his son Oscar were tired of listening to him.

One evening the boy said to his father, "Tomorrow, you know, is my birth-day; you say I shall be twelve years old, father, and then I may help you to work."

“Yes, my boy, you shall learn to help me to work. I’ll teach you first of all how to close two pieces of leather between the clams, and I’ll show you how to make a thread, and fix the bristles.”

“Oh, dear me, father, I’d rather not do that; I don’t want to work with my hands, I’d rather work with my head; that is sure to pay the best.”

“Pooh! pooh! Nonsense, boy,” said his father; “how can a cobbler work with his head? You can’t mend shoes by looking at them.”

“No, father, that’s true enough; but you can earn money in other ways besides patching those old worn-out things; and you’d have earned more money at that, if you had thought a little more, and worked a little less.”

“Well, wife,” said the cobbler, “here’s a pretty state of things. My own son tells me what I ought to do. This comes of sending the lad to school. His learning has made him too proud to follow his father’s trade.”

“Hear the lad out,” his wife quietly answered; “there’s no denying that learning is a wonderful thing.”

“Well, well, wife, there’s no harm in hearing what the young whipper-snapper has to say. Now, my lad, how am I to work less, and yet earn more money?”

“By doing just what I shall tell you ; and if you’ll only trust to me, father, we’ll have a fine shop by this day month, and you shall be able to take a week’s holiday whenever you please. Now, mother and father, good night, for we must all be up betimes to-morrow.”

In the morning, Oscar said to his father, “How much money have you in the house?”

“Only one silver coin, and that’s to buy leather.”

“But, father, you have two gold coins ; I saw them yesterday.”

“Ay, lad ; but they are to pay the rent next week. You know the three months’ rent must be paid, or we shall all have to turn out.”

“Oh, never mind the rent, father ; give the gold coins to me. You shall have money enough next week. Give me the silver coin as well.”

“What would you do with the money, lad, if I were to give it to you ? Not that it’s likely.”

“Buy leather with it,” said Oscar, “leather with the two gold coins, and with the silver coin I would pay Gruff to bring it home in his cart.”

“There’s an extravagant young rascal for you !” said the cobbler to his wife. “He’d ruin us in a week. Why, I’ve carried my own leather all my life, and the very first day this boy wants to hire a horse and cart !”

“Not because I’m too lazy to carry the leather myself, father, but because I like to work with my head whenever it pays better than working with the hands. You trust me, father; the silver coin won’t be wasted. Gruff will do the work he’s paid for, and other work besides.”

“Yes; old Gruff will do the work he’s paid for, but nothing else, except talking, of which, I confess, he is never tired.”

“Husband,” said the cobbler’s wife, “let us try what the boy can do ; we shall have the leather for our money, at any rate, so it will not be all loss.”

“That’s true, wife; I should have seen that if I had thought a bit.”

So the end of all this talk was that the gold and

silver coins were handed over to Oscar, who at once went in search of old Gruff, and engaged him to go to the next town to carry home the leather in his cart.

On the road home, young Oscar said to Gruff, "I suppose you have not heard that father has taken me to learn the trade."

"No, I haven't," said Gruff, "and it isn't such a wonderful piece of news, after all. Haven't you something better than that to tell?"

"Oh, yes, if you care to hear it—about all this leather we just bought."

"Well," replied Gruff, "I wondered what your father is going to do with all that leather."

"Why, Gruff, it is all to make one pair of boots."

"Well! now I am surprised, for I always thought you spoke the truth."

"And so I do, Gruff. All the leather will be used for one pair of boots. Of course they will be a large pair. I shall help to make them; and while I think of it, please don't tell every one what we are going to do. Any particular friend you may tell, of course."

“Why, the boots will be large enough for a giant.”

“That’s just the truth,” said Oscar; “but please don’t tell every one.”

“All right,” said Gruff; “here we are at home. Your father’s at work, I see. Good-bye, and thank you for the job.”

So Gruff departed, and soon spread all over the village that the cobbler was going to make a pair of boots for a giant, and that it was a great secret, which no one was to know.—This being the case, every one ran about to tell every one else, and by the next evening it was known for fifty miles round. Oscar asked his father to begin at once on the large pair of boots, and as he had promised his wife to do as the boy wished, they soon made a beginning. They had not been at work many hours when there was a knock at the door.

“There,” said Oscar, “that’s the silver coin; it’s come back with two or three more in its company.”

He opened the door, and let in the village barber, who brought a pair of boots to be mended.

“Why, neighbour,” said the cobbler, “you never

gave me a job before. I thought you always sent your boots to the town to be mended."

"Yes, neighbour; but you see I didn't come altogether about the boots, but to hear of this large pair you are making for the giant; I want to know all about it."

"All I can tell you, neighbour, is that the boots are to be made, and will fit a giant. You see this chalk line on the floor, that's the measure."

"Well, but when shall I be able to see the boots?" asked the barber.

"Oh, in about a week," said Oscar; "but please don't tell every one about what you have heard."

"Very well," said the barber; who went away and told all his customers that it must be true about the giant's boots, as he had seen the measure of his foot.

Soon after the barber had left, there was another knock at the door, and the village tailor brought a pair of boots to be mended.

"I hear," said he, "that you are making a pair of boots for a giant, and I see it's true, if that is the sole."

“That is the sole of one of the large boots which I am making, and I hope they will be a good pair; but please don't tell every one what you have seen.”

“Good day,” said the tailor; “I only wish you would recommend me to make coats for him.”

Oscar and his father had scarcely gone to work again, when there was another knock at the door. This time the baker came with a pair of shoes to be mended, and to hear all about the giant's boots. He asked the cobbler to recommend the giant to buy bread at his shop, and went away; but he had hardly left the room, when the doctor called with a pair of riding boots, and as many questions as any of the others: in short, before evening, people came from all parts, and the cobbler had more boots and shoes to mend than he could do in a year. Still he grumbled as he sat over the fire, and said to Oscar, “Well, you certainly have brought the work, lad; but, as I said before, you can't mend boots and shoes by looking at them.”

“All right, father; you can be master, and twenty men will soon get through the work for you.”

“Yes, but who’s to pay the twenty men? And why should I let other men get the benefit of my customers?”

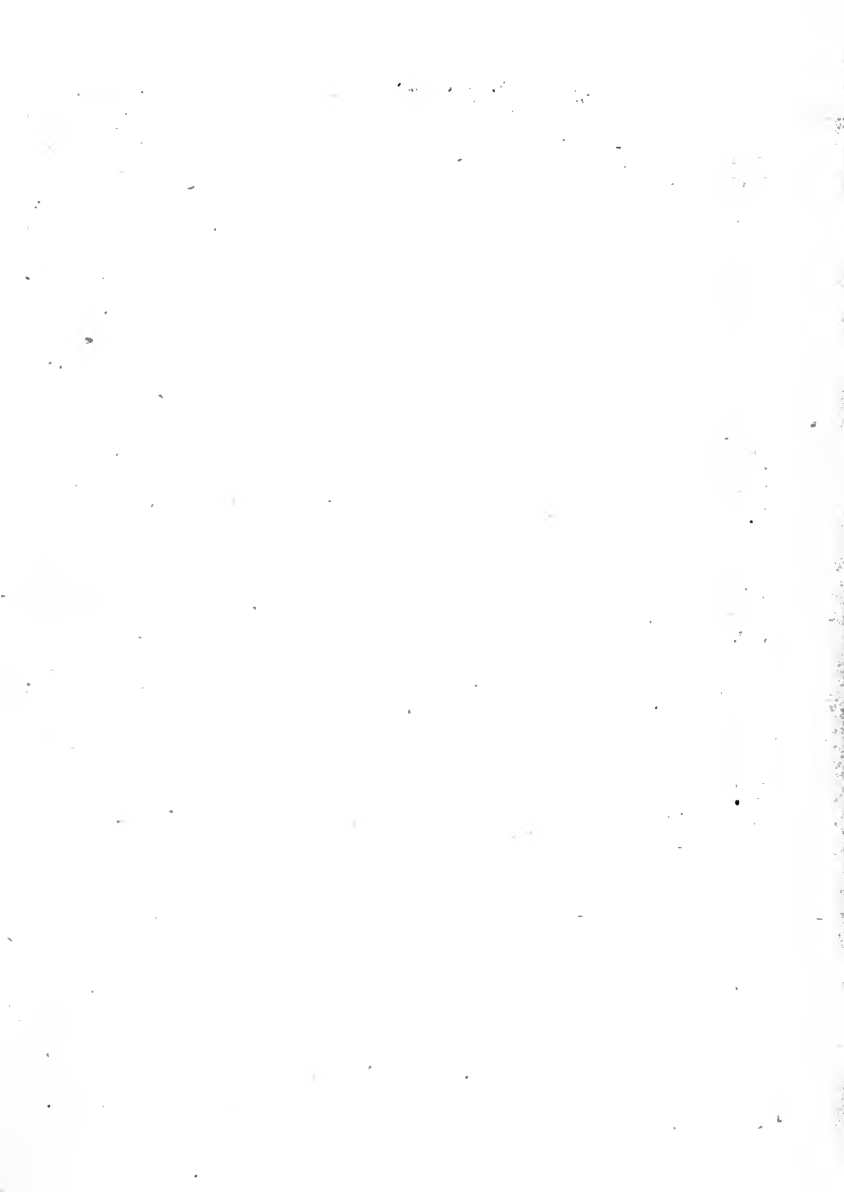
“Well, father, you can’t mend all the boots yourself, and you know that you can make a profit on the men’s work. You need not pay till the jobs are finished; when you will get the money. Besides, you forget the giant’s boots—they must be finished, and they will be quite enough for us to do.”

It was quickly known to the cobblers of other villages that there was plenty of work to be had at the shop of Oscar’s father, and soon he had twenty men working for him, and had earned a great deal of money without much labour, which enabled him to give all his time to the giant’s boots. Folks came from all parts to see this wonderful pair of boots, and at last the King of the Country sent a man all covered with gold lace and diamonds, to say that he wished to see the cobbler.

Oscar’s father was in a great fright, not only because he feared to speak to a king, but in case His Majesty should ask too many questions about the giant.



THE GIANT BOOTS.



“ I'll go, father; never fear: I'll explain everything to the King.” So said Oscar, and so did Oscar.

The King told our young workman to confess the truth; “ For,” said he, “ I cannot think there is a giant among my subjects without my knowledge; no man would dare to be a giant without my permission.”

“ So please your Majesty,” replied Oscar, “ this giant, for whom I am making the boots, is as great a giant, and as substantial a giant as any that ever lived.”

“ And where does he live ?” demanded the King.

“ In Gruff's head,” said Oscar.

The King, who liked a clever answer, laughed and patted Oscar on the shoulder. Then he said, “ Oscar, this giant who lives in Gruff's head may be useful to me, as he has been to you. I appoint you ‘ Cobbler to the Royal Family,’ (Oscar bowed low,) and, as I have no old boots or shoes to mend, I order you to make me a hundred pairs of boots as large as those you have made for Gruff's giant; if they are complete in a month's time, you shall be paid a thousand golden coins for them. When you

send them home, you shall hear what they are wanted for."

You may imagine the delight of Oscar's father and mother when they heard of the King's command. They knew that their money was safe to be paid them, and cried out, "We are the happiest cobbler's family in the world;" and of a truth they were not far wrong, for no cobbler ever before had such an order. More workmen were engaged, a large workshop was built, and leather became almost as precious as gold; but the grand thing of all was that the boots were completed by the end of the month, and ready to be sent to the King's palace.

When Oscar called and informed His Majesty the King of the Country, he was paid the money promised, and was then told that the King wished the boots for his new body guard, who were to protect him from the extortion of King Brassymug, who came once a year to borrow a large sum of money, which was never returned. "He has so many soldiers," said the King of the Country, "that I dare not refuse to lend it to him; but now I have

my new body guard, I don't think he will dare to ask me. As you know for whom the boots are made, you, Oscar, shall be my Messenger of State, and you can say how large the boots are."

In a short time news arrived that King Brassymug and his soldiers were coming, and Oscar was sent to meet them, dressed as the Messenger of State. Before starting he left certain orders with men who were paid by the King of the Country to do whatever they were told, and felt nearly sure that if his instructions were carried out, they would frighten King Brassymug.

Oscar, as Messenger of State, had to wait upon the royal visitor, and as he represented the King of the Country for the time, he could say whatever he pleased. He knew what his royal master most desired, so he commenced by asking Brassymug, as they rode together, if he had heard of the King's new body guard, the giants with red-hot heads. Brassymug had not heard of them, but said he should like to see them.

"It would be a sad thing for your Majesty if you were to catch sight of even one of them," said

Oscar; "for any one who sees them is immediately blinded, his eyes are scorched out of his head; and I know that they are so large you cannot help seeing them if you look at them."

"Then how is it," asked King Brassymug, "that you are not blinded? to know they are so large, you must have seen them."

"Oh, no, your Majesty, I have never seen them, or I should be blind," replied Oscar; "but I have seen their boots, and can therefore guess their size."

"And when I see their boots," said King Brassymug, "I shall know their size; till then you will excuse me for doubting your word."

"Certainly, your Majesty," said Oscar, who laughed in his sleeve, as he saw thick smoke rising from different parts of the woods around the palace of the King of the Country, near to which they were approaching. Why he laughed in his sleeve you will very shortly hear. King Brassymug and his soldiers, attended by Oscar, drew nearer and nearer to the woods.

"What means all the smoke rising up?" asked Brassymug; "are the woods on fire?"

“It certainly looks as if it were so,” said Oscar, and rode on in silence for some minutes; then turning to the King, he said,—

“I think if your Majesty will look between the branches of the trees, you will guess the cause of the smoke. All those boots sticking out between the stems of the firs belong to the body guard, and their red-hot heads have no doubt set fire to the brushwood. They must be lying down to sleep, or else we should see them towering above the trees. I must really be excused from attending your Majesty any farther; for if the giants wake, and I see them rise up, I shall be blinded.”

Brassymug called to his soldiers to stop where they were, and look behind them, for fear they should catch sight of the giants' heads; then turning to Oscar, he said, “Tell your royal master that I do not feel well enough to visit him to-day, and beg his acceptance of this diamond ring as a token of my respect. Thanks for your attendance. I must lose no time in going back to my own country. I really am not well.”

Brassymug was as good as his word; for he left

the country at once, which so delighted the good King, that he presented Oscar with the diamond ring and a thousand golden coins.

All that Oscar said to his father was,—

“It is sometimes better to work with the brains rather than with the hands.”

“True,” replied his father, “and we will all have a week’s holiday, commencing from to-morrow.”

“So we will, father; and now confess the silver coin was not wasted, for without Gruff’s tongue we should have done nothing.”

Of course you have found out that the smoke in the woods came from bonfires lighted by the men paid to do as they were told, and that the boots were placed there by them also.

THE TWO FRIENDS.

ONCE UPON A TIME, there were two friends who vowed to be true to each other, and always to think alike and act alike. They were farmers, and well-to-do in the world. Ben had his farm on the right-hand side of the road, and Stephen had his on the left.

One evening, the day's work being over, they went for a stroll in the fields together. Said Ben to his friend,—

“Did you remark, Stephen, how red the sun looked to-night as it went down to the right of the church? we shall have a fine day to-morrow.”

“Like enough,” said Stephen; “the sun was red, in truth; but it went down to the *left* of the church, not to the right.”

“There you are wrong, Stephen,” replied Ben.

"I am sorry to differ from you, but on such a point as that I must believe my own eyes."

"Yes, but, Ben, you forget that I have eyes also ; and I distinctly saw the sun go down to the left of the church."

"Well," said Ben, in reply, "your word is as good as mine; and as we can't both be right and both wrong, we will wait until to-morrow night to decide the question."

The morrow came, and in the evening the friends met again for their moonlight walk, and *both* exclaimed at once, "So you see I was right about the sun."

This puzzled them very much, and they agreed to go and ask the wise man of the woods which of the two was right. They started at once, and on the road they met a poor man, weary and footsore.

"Can you tell us," said Ben, "how far it is to the place where the wise man of the woods lives?"

"About an hour's journey," said the poor traveller.

"And what sort of a man is he?" asked Ben.

"Oh!" answered the poor traveller, "a decent, well-to-do sort of man, in the prime of life, about my

own age that is; he is chiefly remarkable for his hospitality and great wisdom."

"Thank you," said the two friends, and continued their journey; but they had scarcely walked a hundred yards, when they met another traveller riding a spirited horse at full gallop. "Let us ask him," said Ben; "perhaps the poor traveller has deceived us."

"Stop, Sir!" cried Stephen. "Can you tell us how far it is to the cave of the wise man of the woods?"

"About a quarter of an hour's journey," said the gay young traveller, "and I hope you'll think better of him than I do; for my opinion is that he is a very wretched untidy old man, chiefly remarkable for the length of his beard and his great wisdom."

So saying, the gay young traveller clapped spurs to his steed, and rode on.

"Well, well," quoth Ben, "now we are worse off than ever; one says he is old and wretched, and the other says he is middle-aged and comfortable. But look, how lucky we are! here comes another traveller; we will ask him, and then we shall see whom to believe."

This time it was a very aged man, apparently of

great wealth, for his garments were of rich silks embroidered with gold.

“Reverend Sir,” said Stephen, “we wish you to decide two questions for us, the first one being; How far is it to the place where dwells the wise man of the woods?”

“That is soon answered,” said the aged traveller, “sooner than you will reach there, for it is a good two hours’ journey; and now what is your next question?”

“We wish to know what sort of a man he is.”

“Well, my sons,” replied the aged traveller, “he is quite a young man, chiefly remarkable for his poverty and wisdom.”

“Thank you, Sir,” said the farmers, and they travelled onward more puzzled than ever.

When they reached the cave, they were received by the wise man, who politely asked them to be seated on the log of a tree which served for a bench, and offered them some coarse bread and a cup of water.

“Well,” thought the two friends, “either of the travellers may be right: his beard and hair are so



THE TWO FRIENDS AND THE WISE MAN OF THE WOODS.



thick and long that it is impossible to judge of his age. He certainly is hospitable, and he must be poor, or he would offer something better than bread and water."

After they had partaken of the homely meal, the wise man said, "What is your wish, friends?"

Ben then said, "We wish to know which of us is right. I say the sun goes down to the right of the church, and Stephen says it goes down to the left."

"Friends," said the wise man, "go you to your homes for this night, and to-morrow you shall know; but you must then answer me this question: *What thing is the most precious in this world?*"

The friends departed, and had not gone far on their road home, when they met the poor traveller returning, and agreed to ask him the question.

He did not hesitate a moment when he heard it; but replied at once,—

"Gold is the most precious thing in this world; for without it you can do nothing."

Ben and Stephen agreed that he must be right, and had scarcely gone a hundred yards or so, when the gay young traveller rode towards them, and they

determined to put the same question to him, as they thought two opinions would be better than one. He considered for a moment, and then answered,—

“Love, I take it, is the most precious; for without it the world is a desert.”

“True,” replied Ben and Stephen, “love is certainly the most precious, and will do wonders without gold.”

They went on, and soon saw the aged traveller, to whom they put the same question.

“There is but one answer to that,” said the old man. “Life is the most precious; for without it you are nothing.”

“The old man is right, and so we will answer the wise man to-morrow.” So saying, the two friends shook hands, and parted for the night.

On the next evening they started off for the cave of the wise man, who offered them bread and water as before, and then asked them for the answer to his question.

“Life,” said the two friends, with one voice, “is the most precious in this world.”

“Nay, my friends; for what is life without health?”

“Then it must be love,” exclaimed the friends.

“Nor love,” returned the wise man; “for what is love without hope?”

“Then it certainly is gold, as we thought at first.”

“Neither is it gold; for what is gold without happiness? You have not answered my question, so I must teach you. Content is most precious in this world. He wants for nothing, who has content. And now your own question shall not go unanswered. The sun goes down neither to the right of the church, nor to the left of it, but straight behind it. To those who live on the right-hand side of the road, it seems to go down on the right, and to those on the left, it seems to go down on the left. Be therefore content to let the sun go down as it pleaseth.”

THE KING OF THE BEASTS.

ONCE UPON A TIME, years and years ago, the spirit of the great palm tree, who dwelt in the middle of the jungle of the East, and who ruled the living things of the country, called together all the beasts, and thus addressed them:

“It is fit that one of you should be king over all others. I can no longer govern you myself; for the trees, the plants, and the flowers occupy all my time. I wish that he who is most suited for the position shall be king; and to arrive at a decision I must hear your separate claims to the throne. Speak and I will listen patiently.

The monkey first spoke thus,—

“I am fittest to be king, as I can walk upon two legs, and have hands to hold the sceptre; I am also in shape nearer to man than any other animal.”

Said the elephant,—

“I opine that I should be elected king, because, from my wisdom and gigantic size, I can best uphold the dignity of the throne.”

Then spoke the horse,—

“I am bright of eye, swift of foot, true of courage. Who fitter to be king?”

After the horse the dog put in his claim,—

“I am patient, forgiving, affectionate, brave, and true-hearted; what more can you wish in your king?”

Then the tiger growled, gnashed his teeth, and howled, and said,—

“I am fittest to be king; all the other beasts fear me, and will obey my rule.”

Then grunted the rhinoceros,—

“I for one dispute your right to the throne; for my hide is so thick that I should never fear you, or any other traitor: so I am the best fitted to be king.”

After him spoke the beaver,—

“I build, I navigate, and change the course of rivers. In the summer I think of the winter; and with me for the king all would go well.”

Then the wolf thus asserted his right,—

“I am always on my guard. I can smell my way in the dark. I never tire in my pursuit. I should be king.”

Then the little mouse squeaked out,—

“If you will only make me king, I shall cost very little to keep, not above a penny a-week, a-week, a-week, a-week.”

After the mouse the giraffe, coming forward, spoke thus,—

“My figure fits me best for the throne; nature made me tall, that I might be able to see over all other beasts.”

The camel followed the giraffe with these words,

“I think I should be king, because I can endure thirst and hunger better than other beasts, and in times of famine and drought there would be little danger of the state being left without a ruler.”

The ass kicked up his heels, brayed, and said,—

“Look at my ears, and listen to my voice, are they not both of the finest? no other animal can compare to me in these respects. I certainly ought to be king.”

The leopard spoke after the ass,—

“My claim to the throne is that I have all the good qualities of the tiger, but am not so headstrong as he.”

Reynard the fox next came to the front:

“If I am chosen king,” he said, “I will be bound to govern well, as my knowledge of all sorts of artful tricks will enable me to judge fairly in all disputed cases; but I don’t care much for the throne.”

Then there was heard a loud roaring, and the lion, who had been standing in dignified silence, walked to the feet of the spirit of the palm tree, and said, “I *will* be king; I *am fittest* to be king, *because* I will be king.”

“Silence all,” said the spirit of the palm tree. “Three days of trial shall decide your claims. None of you shall eat or drink for three days; after that time has passed, I will appear to you again.”

So saying, the spirit vanished, and the beasts could not leave the places in which they stood, for a spell was put upon them.

For three long days the beasts waited in hunger and thirst, and by the promised time the spirit ap-

peared to them, bearing in his arms food of all kinds, which he placed upon the earth, and bade them eat quietly. The beasts, almost perishing of hunger, rushed to the feast, and at once eagerly devoured what was provided for them; all but the lion, who walked in a stately manner, took his share, and ate it quietly and calmly.

The spirit of the palm tree called the beasts together once more, and said,—

“The lion shall be the king of the beasts. He is best fitted to govern others, who can best govern himself.”

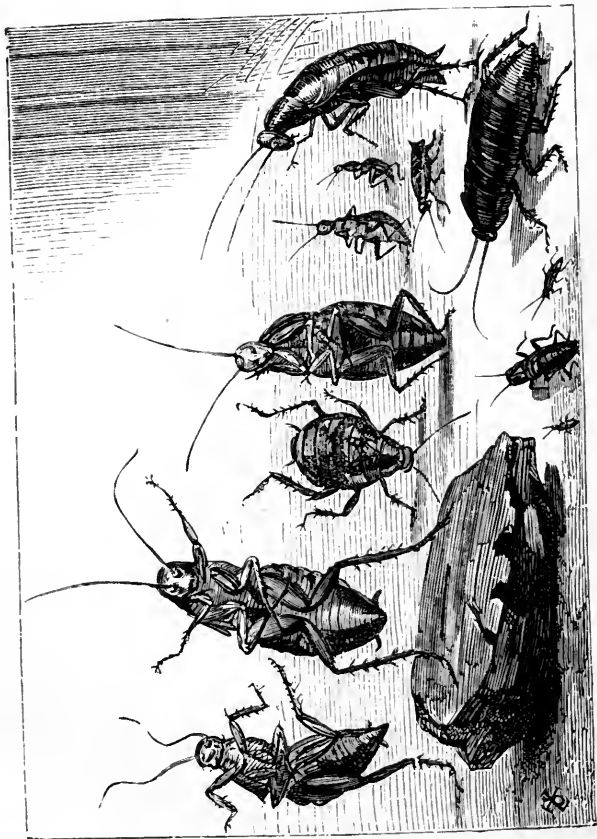
So the lion was made king, and has been king ever since.

THE BLACK-BEETLES.

ONCE UPON A TIME, a certain lady's house was overrun by a colony of black-beetles, big and little, but all possessing large appetites for bread and cheese. So much did they eat, that it became necessary to take steps for decreasing their number, and the lady soon made up her mind as to the course she would pursue. Waiting till night-time, when the black-beetles were just thinking of attacking her larder, she took her largest pie-dish, filled it with beer and water—sweetened to make it nice, and placed it on the floor, with some little pieces of stick leaning against the edge, like ladders against the side of a house. Now, when the black-beetles smelt the beer, they said to one another, "Here is just what we want—a fine feast of something delicious." So five or six dozen of

them at once climbed up the little sticks in such a hurry to reach the edge of the dish, that at least thirty of them were pushed into the beer. There they began to sing funny songs as they swam about, never thinking at all of how they should get out again; and they seemed so happy, and praised the sweetness of the beer so much, that a number of the others jumped in with them, and by the next morning more than a hundred of them were drowned.

There was a great uproar among the colony of black-beetles; they held a public meeting under the fire-grate, and formed a sort of society, each of them agreeing not to go near the dangerous pie-dish, and for a few nights no more of them were killed. But one of the number, who was old enough to have known better, determined to just go and look at the pie-dish; "For," said he to himself, "after all there can be no harm in looking at anything." So he told his wife that he was going to attend a meeting of the anti-pie-dish society under the fire-grate, but went straight to the pie-dish instead. He climbed up one of the sticks, and stood for some time sniffing the



THE ANTI-PIE-DISH SOCIETY.



delicious fumes; presently he thought of what his dead friends had said in praise of the beer, and he resolved to taste it. He leant over gently, hanging by one of his hind legs, by which means he could just reach the liquid with his mouth; he took one long sip, then another and another, till he began to feel rather unsteady. Just as he was thinking about one more sip, he remembered his promise not to go to the pie-dish, and pulling himself up by his legs, he managed to roll home to his lodgings under the pantry floor, where he slept very soundly till morning. Next evening, remembering the beer, he thought, "It was very good of me to come away so soon last night; it shows I have great self-command. I think I ought to go again, if only to prove to myself that I can do twice, what I have done once. Nothing in moderation can hurt one."

For several nights the miserable black-beetle continued to visit the pie-dish on the sly, without saying anything about it to his wife; and one night he had quite made up his mind that that visit should be his last, so he took a good long drink—lost his balance—tumbled into the beer—and was drowned.

The next morning his wife, finding he did not return, and fearing for the worst, went to seek him at the pie-dish. When she learnt the sad truth, she jumped in after her unworthy husband, and died a victim to excess of affection and beer.

THE GREAT GENERAL.

ONCE UPON A TIME, the people of a certain nation were very much troubled by wars with other countries; all their spare money was spent in buying guns and swords, clothes and food, for the army of soldiers who fought for them. Things could not continue in this state for long, without causing a great deal of distress among the poorer class of people, who would much rather have had peace and quiet, especially as it would cost nothing; they therefore petitioned the Prince of the nation to put a stop to the wars as soon as possible.

“Very well, my good people,” replied the Prince; “but who is to do it?”

“*General Macwiddlewaddle*,” cried out the people, with one voice. “He is the man to fight for this nation.”

So the general was sent for, and ordered to fight a few successful battles as soon as he could. The general was glad of the chance of showing how well he could lead the army; and as the soldiers certainly fought better when he was at their head, the nation was soon at peace.

“The general must certainly have a statue erected to him,” said the Prince of the country, and so said the people; but the statue was never erected, and no one thought any more about it.

Years and years afterwards, when the general was getting to be quite an old man, fresh wars broke out, and no one could lead the soldiers to battle without being beaten. Some one thought of the great General Macwiddlewaddle; and after a little trouble he was found living in a small room over a stable, with scarcely enough food to keep him alive.

“Will you fight our battles for us, General?” said the people.

“What will you give me if I do?” said the old soldier.

“We will certainly give you a statue in the market-place this time, or anything you wish for.”



THE GREAT GENERAL.



“ I wish for no statue, good people. If you promise to see that I have plenty to eat and drink, as long as I live, and that you will have no other general but me, I will fight your battles for you, and ask nothing more.”

“ Agreed! agreed! Macwiddlewaddle for ever!” cried out the delighted people.

The general, as I have said, was becoming an old man; in fact, he was quite bent forward with age, but he could still give out the word of command; and soon after he had put on his cocked hat, the wars were at an end, and the country was at peace once more.

* * * * *

Years passed on; the general's hair was very thin on his head, just about as many locks as would go to make a good-sized moustache for a young general, but still he was at the head of the army, and still he gave the word of command whenever there was a war.

* * * * *

More years passed on; the general's head was quite bald, and he had to be propped up on crutches as he went to battle. Still he was always victorious, because even when he was beaten he never knew it, and would not give in.

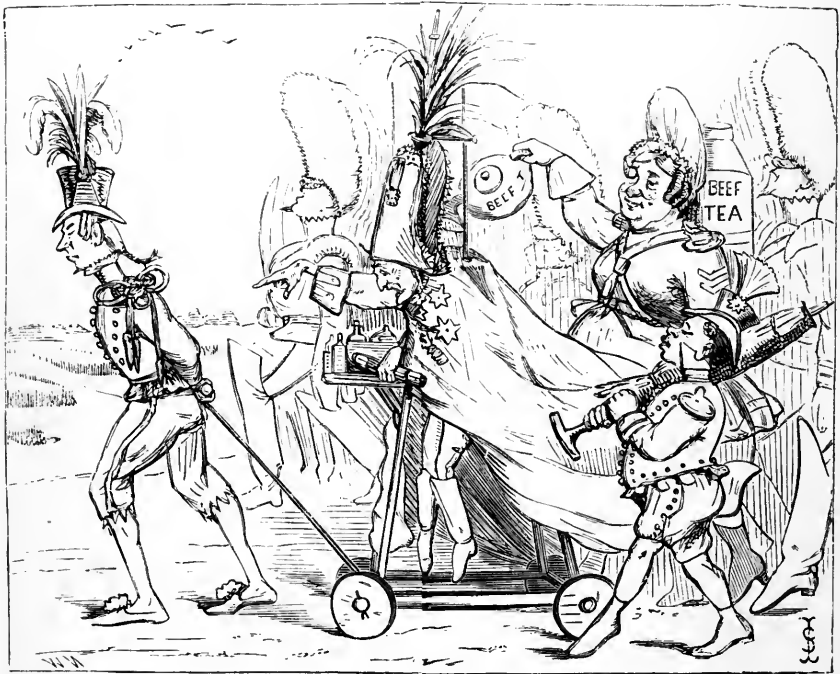
* * * *

A few more years went by, and the general was not only bald, but also quite blind; he could neither walk upon crutches nor ride his horse, but had to be wheeled about on a wooden stand, with sticks and props tied to his limbs to keep him from tumbling to pieces. Every day he was sprinkled with strong beef-tea to nourish him, and several servants had nothing else to do besides waiting upon him. Still he gave the word of command in battle.

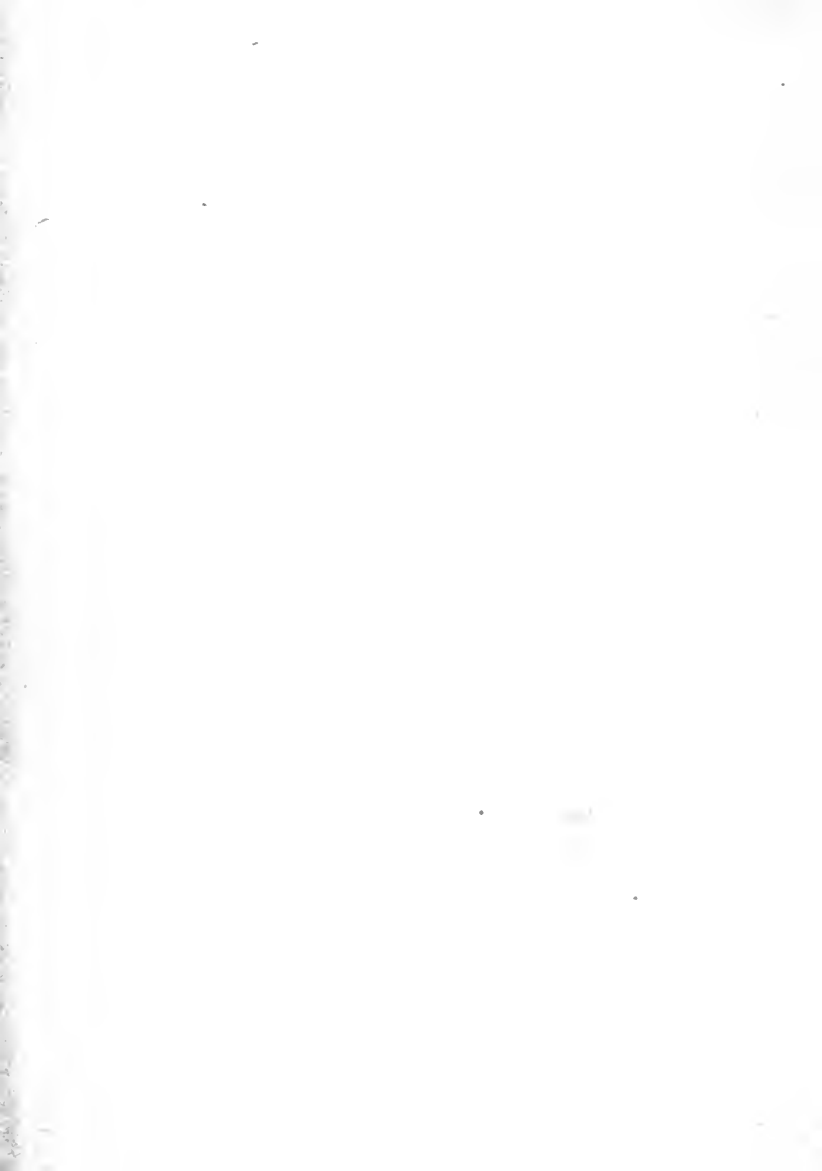
“This is better than the statue,” thought the general, whenever the serving woman brought the beef-tea pot.

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Another year went by, and the general's voice became feeble. He could no longer give the word of



THE GREAT GENERAL GOING TO THE WARS.



command in battle, so he called all his soldiers together, and took leave of them, after which he was wheeled into his tent for the night. When the woman with the beef-tea went as usual at supper-time, the general said to her,—

“Take away the beef-tea pot; I have no more need for it. Leave me alone.”

In the morning, the colonel of the army entering the tent, saw only a few sticks, a little dust, and a heap of clothes with a cocked hat on the top. Calling one of the servants, he said,—

“Please to bring a broom, and sweep away General Macwiddlewaddle; but you can leave his cocked hat, for I think it will fit me.”

The servant said, “Sweep away General Macwiddlewaddle, Sir? Yes, Sir!”

So there was an end of him.

LILA THE LOVELY.

ONCE UPON A TIME, there lived a poor widow, whose only way of earning her living was to sit spinning yarn from morning till night. She kept a few hives of bees in her garden, and sold the honey they produced for money to pay her rent. The bees made honey from the beautiful flowers which grew in the garden; and when they had taken from them as much as could be gathered, they would fly for great distances in all directions to the neighbouring gardens, and return laden with honey and wax. Every morning before she began her spinning, the widow would go for a short walk in her garden, to get a breath of fresh air and to speak kindly to the bees, who knew her perfectly well, and would allow her to come close to the hives without attempting to sting her.

At the time of which I am speaking there were many flowers, and the bees were very busy; but when the old woman came out at night to lift the hives while the bees were sleeping, she found that instead of becoming heavier they were getting lighter every day. She was vexed at this, for she had hoped to have been able to save a little money if the hives had yielded well, and now it seemed likely that the rent would not be paid. What could be the cause of the waste? The bees could not eat it, for they always lay by a store for the winter. The woman determined to watch the hives, and for a whole day she sat looking hard at them, and saw nothing to account for the loss; but the next morning they were lighter by two or three pounds. So she took a lanthorn, and watched by night, and then indeed she saw something that astonished her. A large, very large snail-shell came from among the lilies, and, to her surprise, she saw inside it, not a snail, but a lovely little girl, crawling on all-fours, and going straight to the bee-hives to help herself to the honey. The bees did not sting her, and after she had had her meal of honey, the little girl

was crawling back to her lilies; but the widow stood before her with the lanthorn.

“Who is this that steals my honey?” she called out.

The child only smiled at the old woman, for it was too young to speak, and the smile was so sweet, so innocent and trusting, that the poor widow’s tender heart was melted. She took the little thing in her arms, and carrying her within doors, removed the shell from her back, and was delighted to see that the little girl was well formed and nicely enough dressed.

“You came from the bed of lilies, so I will call you Lila, my sweet little girl. You shall be my child while my own boy is away, and I will work for you and love you as my own. What if I have to spin for an hour longer every day? your smile and your prattle when you learn to talk will repay me for that.”

The child smiled, and jumped towards the old woman’s face, as though to kiss her, and from that time Lila was the constant care of her new protectress.

Years passed on, and Lila grew to be a beautiful girl, graceful, clever, and good; her voice was most sweet in its tone, and she could sing as well as any skylark. The widow found that instead of the little wanderer who stole the honey being a trouble and an expense to her, she was a great help; for Lila could spin finer than the widow, and her fingers were so nimble that she got through an immense quantity of work every day, besides singing so beautifully, which made work twice as pleasant. The widow almost forgot her troubles, even the absence of her only boy. He had gone for a sailor about a year before Lila was found in the snail-shell, and from that time the widow had never heard of him. She seldom talked of him, even to Lila, and when she did it was always a sad day for them. Lila and the widow lived from day to day a quiet peaceful life, waiting in the firm belief that one day Robin the sailor would return to the cottage; and after years of waiting he did return, a fine, strong young man, as brown as a berry from being exposed to the hot sun. He and his mother knew each other at once, and after the first kissing and crying

was over, the widow laughed at his strong manly voice; it was, she said, the only thing changed since she parted from him. It was a kind voice, for all that it was a strong one, and so thought Lila as she heard him talking to his mother; she thought him handsome and brave-looking, and I may as well tell you at once, that she was quite prepared to fall in love with him on the moment. Robin was charmed with Lila; and when she sang in the evening, he said he had never heard anything half so sweet.

After a month or so, it was time for Robin to go to sea again; but when he tried to fix a day for his starting to seek a ship, he could not bear the idea of leaving Lila, and it was settled that he should stay on land, and work at a farm to earn his living. Lila promised to be his wife when he could afford to keep her, and, as Robin was strong and willing, he soon found employment, and got on wonderfully well; so well indeed, that in a year's time he was ready to marry, and was as gay and blithe as a full-blown poppy when the sun shines.

But — now came the sadness again to the widow and her son; for Lila disappeared from

the house about a week before the day fixed for the wedding. No one knew how or where she had gone, and poor Robin was half worn out with wandering in search of her. One more day, and he would give up the search, for a while at any rate. Through the wood he went, looking for his lost love, and half hoping to see her lying or sitting at the foot of some tree; but no, he wandered all day without finding a trace of her, and by sunset he turned to go homewards. The moon arose, casting a bright light on all the upper branches of the trees, stealing between the trunks and stems, gliding up the avenues, and making the flat open places look like sheets of silver water.

Robin took good care to keep his eyes open, and walk carefully; for on such a night the fairies were sure to be out and up to their pranks. But all his care was of no use; for before he knew it he stepped into a fairy ring, and in an instant he was spell-bound. Elves and fairies, imps and goblins, in that moment, all became visible to his eyes; their shouts and laughter, their songs, and the pattering of their tiny feet, made together a curious mixture of

sounds, not very loud, but still each one distinct. The fairies were climbing to the tops of the fox-gloves, and swinging up and down, chasing each other in sport, tumbling from the highest flowers on to the soft mosses, crawling through the little holes which dropping water had made in the stones, chasing the moths and beetles and bats; all was life and movement. Robin saw all this in less time than it has taken me to tell you, and he saw also a very grand procession of fairies, with the King of fairy-land at the head, coming towards him down the glade. Hundreds of fireflies flew around them, making it almost as light as day, and the birds in their nests each gave a short song as the troop passed on. Round about him they ran, joining hands, and whirling as fast as a catharine-wheel. The King seated himself on a toadstool, with his courtiers bowing before him, and mightily he seemed to enjoy the fun his elves were having. He smiled at Robin's puzzled look, and after a little time, raising his sceptre as a signal for the sports to cease, he beckoned Robin to advance, which rather doubtfully he did.

“Mortal,” said the fairy King, “you have dared to enter our royal wood; say wherefore your life should not be sacrificed as the penalty of your rashness!”

“Take my life, and welcome to it, your Majesty, if you will. I cannot be more wretched than I am already.”

“How is that?” asked the King.

“I am in love, your Majesty, with one of the most beautiful women on earth.”

“That should not make you miserable,” interrupted the King; “at least I find that love makes me quite the reverse.”

“But please your Majesty, I have lost my love; she is gone I know not where. It was through seeking for her that I am in this wood to-night.”

“Well, well, mortal,” said his Majesty, “I will spare your life if you will give up all thoughts of your love; otherwise I am afraid I must put you to sleep for at least a hundred years.”

“Pray do so at once, and I shall thank you; for I cannot be happy without Lila.”

When Robin had thus answered, the fairy King seemed pleased, and said,—

“Robin, you are true to your love: you shall be free; for fairies never harm the true and good, although we sometimes tease them a little. Accept this amulet, which will answer three questions; one of the past, one of the present, and one of the future. Cup-bearer! bring hither some of the choicest honey-drink, and give to the mortal.”

A tiny page with moth's wings flew up to Robin's mouth, holding an acorn cup containing a few drops of liquid, which he sipped, and at once felt as light-hearted and gay as before Lila was missing. The fairy King and court then saluted Robin, who bowed in return, and hastened home, bearing with him the fairy's gift. On entering his cottage, the first thing he did was to take a seat in front of the fire, and examine the amulet. It was a beautiful ruby ring, and Robin sat looking at it a long time before he dared to speak, then he asked the question of the past.

“Tell me, Amulet, how came Lila in the snail-shell?”

The ruby in the ring twinkled and glittered in the firelight, while a small voice answered,—

“Lila came in the snail-shell crawling on hands and feet.”

“I could have told you that,” thought Robin, but he said nothing for some little time; then he asked,—

“Where is Lila at this time, O Amulet?”

The voice of the ring answered,—

“Where Lila’s clothes are, there is Lila.”

“That I could have told also without your help,” thought Robin; but still he was polite to the ring, and asked his last question in a civil tone of voice:

“When shall I see Lila again?”

“When you turn your head,” said the amulet.

Robin looked behind him, and there stood Lila! She was clothed in rich attire, with a stem of lilies in her hand.

Poor Robin! he knew not whether to laugh or to cry. It was certainly Lila, and on that account he might equally do either; but it was Lila the lovely more lovely than ever, and in such a splendid dress, that he could hardly hope she would care to speak to him, much less to be his wife; therefore it seemed

a fitting occasion to cry. However, before he could do anything of the sort, Lila advanced, placed the stem of lilies in his hand, and said, "Robin, I am yours; the lilies allow it, the fairies forbid it not, so who shall say nay? From this day I am a woman, as this day, for your sake, I have thrown off all my fairy nature. To-morrow shall be our wedding day."

The wedding cake was ready, and had been for some time. Robin, Robin's mother, and Lila, were all agreed that the marriage *should* take place, and on the morrow it *did* take place accordingly. A large slice of cake was sent to the fairy King, and let us hope that he enjoyed it.

CITRUS THE CRUEL MAN.

ONCE UPON A TIME, there was a cruel man named Citrus, whose eyes shone like green diamonds. He was of such a bad nature that he was never happy unless he was ill-treating something or other. He was so very cruel that the Queen of the fairies heard of his doings, and determined to try to make him better natured; so she dressed herself like an old woman, and went to see cruel old Citrus, taking with her a little puppy.

“Good morning, Mr. Citrus,” said the Queen of the fairies; “I have heard of you, and have come to see you, and have brought my little dog with me as a present for you; only you must be very kind to him.”

“Oh! thank you, ma’am,” said Citrus. “I’ll take such great care of him, I promise you. I am very glad to have such a nice little dog;” and so he

was, but he meant to be cruel to it—that is why he was pleased.

“Very well then,” said the Queen; “you must keep him nice and warm, and give him plenty to eat every day; if you do, I will reward you when I come to see you again; but now, good-bye.”

So saying, she returned to fairy-land.

“Now, you little wretch,” said Citrus, as soon as the fairy had gone, “I promised to keep you warm, so here’s the blanket to begin with (showing the puppy a stick); this will warm you nicely;” and the cruel man hit him as hard as he could, again and again. “Now you must have your dinner, little puppy; and I hope you will enjoy it, for you must be hungry after your long walk with the old woman who brought you here. Let me see, I promised to give you more than you can eat, and here it is. This beautiful hard bone without any meat upon it is more than you can eat, so take it; and now I have kept my word. Your mistress will find that I take great care of you. To-morrow you shall have another nice dinner and another good warming.”

Very early the next morning Citrus went with





CITRUS AND THE FAIRY'S DOG.

[Page 93.]

the stick in his hand, and was surprised to see how much bigger the dog had grown during the night ; Citrus did not know that the fairy Queen had given it plenty of food after he had gone inside his house. He was very pleased, and said,—

“So, so, little puppy, you seem to grow wonderfully. I must really give you twice as much beating to-day, and only half a bone ; perhaps soon I shall be able to beat you all day long, and then I shall be quite happy.”

You see what a cruel man he was. Well, every day for a long time Citrus beat the dog, which grew bigger and bigger, till a year had passed by, and every night the fairy Queen came and fed the poor animal. On the very last day of the year, the cruel old man went in the morning as usual to beat the dog ; but at the first stroke of his stick the animal flew at him, seized him by the throat, and would have very quickly killed him, (for Citrus was too frightened to help himself,) if the Queen of the fairies had not come sailing along just in time to save him.

“Cruel man !” said the Queen, “you have ill-

treated my dog; it is only right that you should be punished for it. For a year and a day you shall hourly suffer as many strokes from the stick as you have given, and you shall never again have enough to eat."

Citrus was punished by the fairies as the Queen had commanded; and although he is not a nice man even now, he never ill-uses any animal, for fear he should have to suffer in the same way.

I only hope you, my young readers, will never hurt a poor helpless puppy.

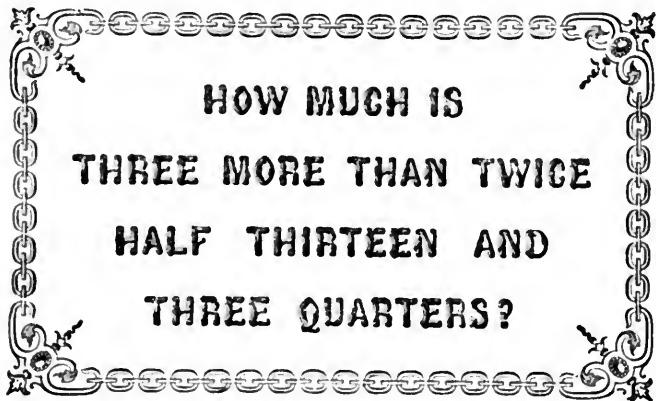
THE FIGURE PUZZLE.

ONCE UPON A TIME, there was a very clever old gentleman, who had a number of little boys locked up in a room together, and every day he would tease them with puzzling questions, of which he had a great number.

As soon as one was answered, out came another twice as difficult. It was no use saying you didn't know, for then he would give you a book which had a thick cover and a brass lock and key to keep quite safe all the wonderful things inside it, telling you to read and find out for yourself.

So the little boys who at first knew scarcely anything at all, read and read all day long, and learned to answer a great many questions; but they did not like it, and were not very fond of the clever old

gentleman, I can tell you. One question he put to them was this.



As all the little boys were to be kept on bread and water until it was answered, they were in a terrible fright for fear it should not be in the book; and in trying to find it out they learnt a great number of useful things, and became so clever that when they grew up to be men, all the words they spoke were properly pronounced, and their letters were all very well written, without any blots or mistakes in spelling. This is all I can tell you just at present

about the little boys, but I daresay you wish to know the answer to the question which was so difficult. This is the secret. Twice half thirteen and three-quarters is the same as once thirteen and three-quarters, and three more than that make *sixteen and three-quarters*. If the little boys had known this, they would have saved themselves a great deal of trouble, but they would have missed learning all the useful things which they found out while they were seeking for this question, which of course they answered at last.

THE PRIZE.

ONCE UPON A TIME, the Queen of the fairies came on a visit to the school where the wise old gentleman made the little boys look for answers to his hard questions, and offered a prize to the boy who should behave best for one day. It was early in the morning when she called, and for that day there was to be no learning lessons or answering hard questions, but there was to be a whole holiday, and the boys might do just as they pleased. The Queen promised to call in the evening, and give the prize herself, but no boy was to touch it in the meantime, although all might look at it as long as they pleased. The box containing the gift was opened, and, behold, it was a most magnificent cake, with plums and currants as thick together as bees in a hive. A list of the boys' names was written on a

slate, which was placed in front of the cake in the great schoolroom.

The day passed quickly, as holidays always do, and by evening-time all the boys assembled, each one hoping to receive the prize.

The Queen of the fairies kept her word ; and as soon as the boys were seated on the forms, she took the slate in her hand, and held it for them to see.

“Look,” said she ; “there were more than two hundred names on the slate this morning, now there are only five. Every boy who has touched the cake has rubbed out his own name, although he does not know it—the slate is a magic tablet ; and as there are still five names visible, let the five boys come to the front—they shall each have a taste of the cake for their obedience, but only one boy shall have the richest plum of all.”

The boys took their seats as requested, and the Queen then raised her wand once or twice, uttered a few words, and immediately the five boys stood up.

“Empty your pockets,” said she to Tommy Tiddler, who was the nearest. His pockets were full

of apples. "You have been stealing the farmer's apples," said the Queen, "so you may go behind; Tommy Tiddler, there is no prize for you. Now the next boy.'

"Ah, Master Muffett, how is your sister? Does she still sit on a tuffet? And tell me, what have you been doing all day?"

Master Muffett immediately stood on his head, and whistled, saying, "This is what I have been doing, ma'am."

"And is that all you have done?" asked the Queen.

"Yes, ma'am," said Master Muffett. "I did it because it is so very difficult that it must be good."

"That doesn't follow," replied the Queen. "Take your slice of cake, and sit down. No prize for you."

Little Jack Horner was the next; and when he was asked what he had done, he replied,—

"I have starved myself all day long, and, please ma'am, I'm so hungry."

"Then take your slice of cake, and go to the back form; there is no prize for you. I can see

that you are usually a very greedy boy, and that you know it, because you have eaten nothing to-day, when you wish to be good. If you try very hard, you will soon be a better boy."

"Why, I declare, here is Jack the Giant Killer. I hope you have behaved yourself, Jack, for I am very fond of you." Then the Queen smiled at Jack, and asked what he had been doing.

"If you please, ma'am, I've been fast asleep, and dreaming about giants."

"Then I'm afraid I can't give you the prize, Jack ; but there is a large slice of the cake for you. And now Fortunatus is the last boy ; let us hear what he has been doing."

"I'm very sorry, ma'am," said Fortunatus ; "I quite meant to do something very good to win the prize, but I had no time, for I have been helping Dame Durden to dig her potatoes. All her serving men and serving maids have left her now that she is old and poor, so I was forced to help her, and lose my chance of the prize."

"Fortunatus is the lucky one," said the Queen of the fairies ; "he has done a charitable act without

any hope for the reward, so the prize is his. All the boys knew that Dame Durden wants help, but no one except Fortunatus thought of her to-day."

With these words, the Queen produced a beautiful velvet cap, which she gave to Fortunatus, saying,—

"Take this cap ; whenever you wear it you will be invisible. Use it well, and prosperity attend you. Farewell, boys."

You all know the adventures which Fortunatus had with his wonderful cap. Those who do not had better read all about it as soon as possible, if they wish to be amused.

THE SIX GOBLIN EGGS.

ONCE UPON A TIME (or very soon afterwards), as Rudolph the woodcutter was walking in the forest, he lost his way, and came to a part of the world which he had never before reached. Right in front of him he saw large mountains of black marble, and he felt curious to know how it was, that as they were so very large and so very black, he had never seen them from his own cottage.

The truth is, that he had strayed by accident into the boundaries of that part of the world which belongs to demons and goblins; and, as every one knows, nobody can see that from our part of the world. But Rudolph did not know where he was; so on he went, walking as boldly as a soldier going to the wars. The trees were very thick and close together, with branches twisted into all sorts of ugly

shapes, and knots in the bark like great laughing faces. Everything was black—the sky, the trees, the rocks and stones, the water in the rivers and springs—in fact, everything in this strange country, down to the little mosses which grew between the stones; everything was black as night, and yet Rudolph could see all things distinctly. Not a sound was to be heard, not even his own footfall on the ground; and once, when he spoke to himself in wonder at the sights he saw, no sound came from his lips; but everything was so silent that he almost seemed *to hear* the strange and wonderful stillness.

As Rudolph walked on, the rocks and stones which stood in his way rolled on one side or the other, and the trees glided out of his path, so as to allow him to pass. Then he looked behind him, for he began to be rather frightened, and thought he had better go back; but the trees he had just passed all stood close together, and the ugly faces frowned upon him, while the rocks and stones piled themselves up in a great heap, right in the way he would have taken; so he was forced to put a bold front upon it, and go onwards. After he had walked

for a long time, he came to the top of the black mountain, where the air was colder than ice and snow mixed together. Here was one large tree growing, more twisted and ugly than any he had met with ; and as he stood at the foot of it, he saw a hole in the ground, not very large nor very deep, nicely rounded, and shaped quite smoothly. Inside the hole lay six large eggs as white as white is, and seeming to be much whiter, because everything else was so black. He at once made up his mind to take them home with him to hatch, and hoped he would then have some chickens to lay other eggs to sell for money ; so he tied them up in his handkerchief, and took them away with him. He found them very heavy, and now that he had them to carry he did not get on half so quickly as before ; but he thought of the fine chickens to lay big eggs, and he didn't much mind being tired, so he trudged on without grumbling ; " For," thought he, " as the trees and stones will not let me go back, I must either walk on or stop here for ever." On then he went, and was soon at the foot of the mountain. Everything moved out of his way as before ; but if he

attempted to go back, or even to look behind him, hills, rocks, and trees closed in again.

He walked on, and on, and on, till suddenly he came to the place from which he started when he lost his way in the morning, and by going straight forward he had reached his home again before the clock struck twelve. He at once placed the eggs to hatch in front of the stove, put on plenty of fuel to keep the fire burning, and then went to sleep. As soon as the day broke he was awake and up; and going at once to the stove to see how the eggs were getting on, he found, to his great delight, that they were all cracking, and that something was moving inside each of them. But he was more frightened than pleased, when presently he saw a little leg, the shape of a wee man's, sticking out of one shell, and an arm and a big nose out of another. However, he still stood watching the eggs as they hatched one after another, and did not run away, as I should have done had I been there. Soon another leg came out of the first shell; and then, to see the eggs jumping about on two legs, must have been good fun.

After a time all the eggs were hatched, and Rudolph then found, that instead of chickens, the eggs had hatched into little goblins, six little goblins. I won't attempt to describe them, but you will see their portraits on another page.

“Well,” thought Rudolph, “here’s a fine piece of work! I suppose I shall have nice trouble to keep them in order; but if I can, I’ll make them work for me—and, dear me! I wonder what they eat. He tried them first with black pudding, then with wine and bread, and afterwards with beer and bacon,—in fact, with everything he had in the cottage; but they would neither eat nor drink anything that was offered to them. They seemed to be very quiet, good little goblins; and, after the few capers when they first came out of the shells, they all went and sat quietly round the stove, warming their hands and feet, and the tips of their tails, staring very hard at the fire all the time. Rudolph was very pleased to find that they were such nice goblins, and that they did not seem to be at all hungry, and he quite longed for the time when they would be able to help him in the forest.

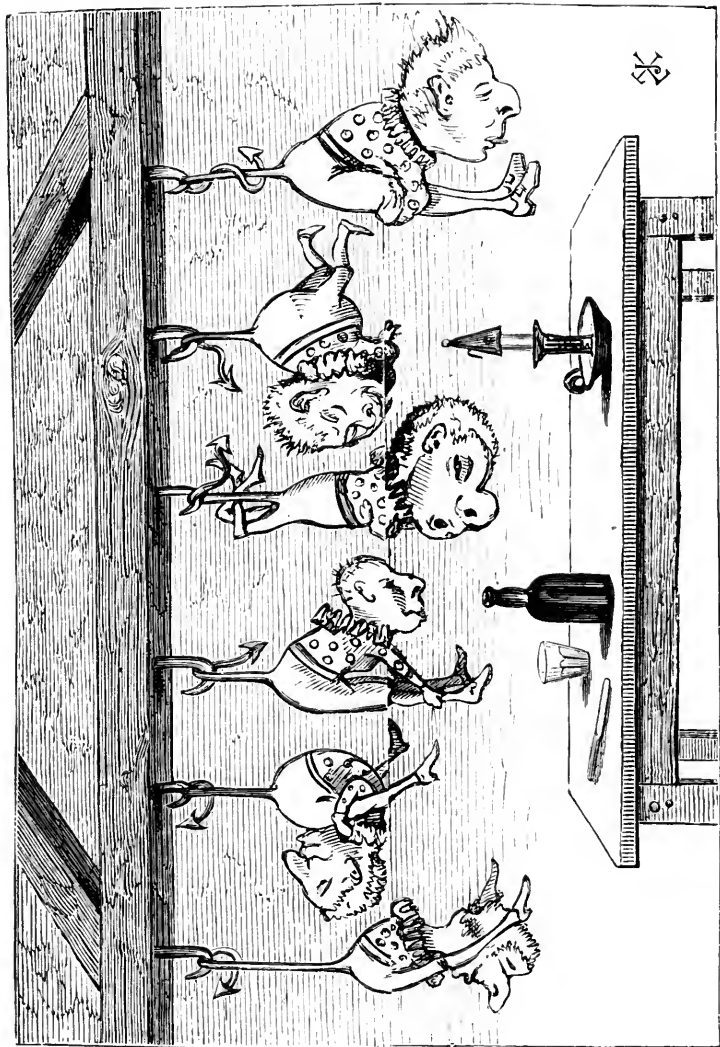
Every day they grew stronger and bigger—also older, and were very fond of Rudolph, who was kind to them at first. They were so clever in using the axe, and so willing to tie the wood in bundles, that they soon learned to do it faster than their master, who, after a day's work, would go home with as much wood as he could sell in a week. Then, they never required any food; but at night, while Rudolph was in bed, they used to fix themselves by their tails to the bacon hooks in the kitchen, swing themselves backwards and forwards, and so go to sleep very comfortably, hanging all in a row. If, however, there was a candle or a lamp in the kitchen, they could not get to sleep at all, but would stare at it for hours, with all their great eyes; and it was no use taking it out of the room, for they were after it in an instant, staring and staring at it. They would not do the least bit of work of any sort while they could see a flame, and the only way to stop their staring was to blow out the light at once. Rudolph could teach them to do a great many things by daylight, but he never could teach them to leave off staring at a flame, whether

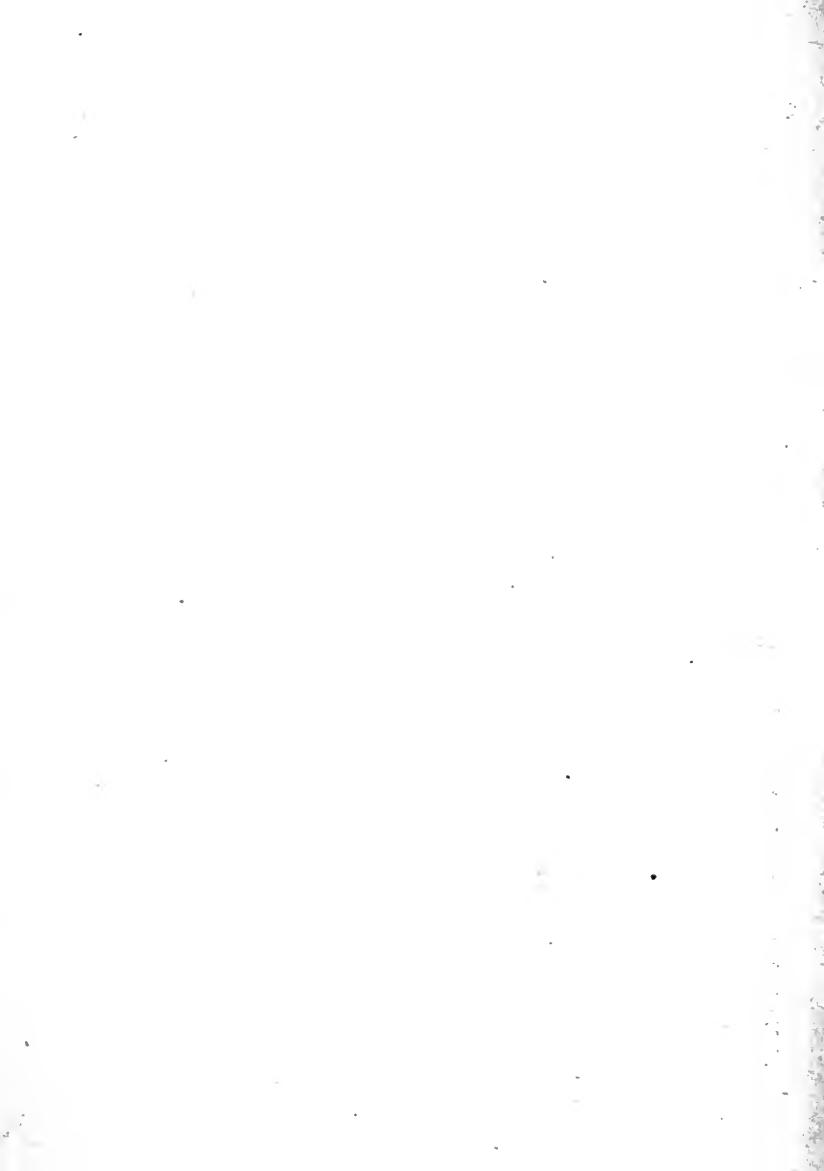
of lamp, candle, or blazing log. If they were in the woods and he lit his pipe, they would stop and stare at the burning match, but as soon as it was out they would go on again with their work. They were never idle at other times; indeed, they were so industrious that very soon Rudolph became rich enough to buy a horse and cart, to carry his wood from the forest to the town where he sold it. They could then go to work in grand style, Rudolph in the cart, and his goblins running three on one side of it and three on the other; while at night, as they went home, Rudolph would walk with the horse, and the goblins would sit in the cart, all in a row on the top of the bundles of wood. The woodman made so much money that he scarcely knew what to do with it, so he placed it all in a box, where he had hidden all the money he had saved in all his life; but the more he earned, the more he wanted, and the poor little goblins had scarcely a minute's rest. They would have had to work at night as well as by day, if it had not been too dark in the forest to see without a light.

Soon, Rudolph began to take with him every

day six whips which he had bought, and he lashed the poor goblins whenever they rested for a single moment. He took six whips, one for each goblin, because he whipped them so often that one would soon have worn out; and the goblins found that the harder they worked, the more they were expected to do.

At last they could not bear to be so ill-treated any longer, and determined to do something to stop it. So one fine morning they tied each other's hands tightly behind their backs, and Rudolph could neither undo the knots nor cut the strings, although he tried very hard to do so. Of course he could not make them work now, and he just left them hanging on the bacon hooks until he could think of some way to get rid of them. He smoked his pipe, and sat thinking for two or three days, till at last he invented this capital plan. He waited until night-time, and then he lit a large lantern, which he took into the kitchen, where the goblins were still hanging. They all stared at the light as he held it for them to see, and then he walked out of the room, taking the light with him.





In a moment they dropped down off the bacon hooks, one after the other, to follow the light, staring all the way as they went.

Rudolph knew that so long as he held the light for them to see, so long would they follow it, and off he started for the demon forest, the goblins following him, staring as hard as ever. They soon reached the top of the mountain, where the tree grew which had the ugliest faces on it, and where the six eggs had been found. Rudolph hung up the lantern to one of the branches, meaning to run away and leave the goblins to stare at the light. But, as soon as the lantern was fixed to the tree, Rudolph was fixed also, and do what he would he could not help staring at the light as hard as any of them ; he could not move hand or foot, and so could not run away, or crawl away either.

They are all of them there to this day, staring away at the lantern, and so they will continue till the candle goes out, and then—I'm sure I don't know what will become of them.

THE DRAGON ALL COVERED WITH SPIKES.

ONCE UPON A TIME, there was a beautiful country where the people lived as happily as so many birds in a nest; they never quarrelled among themselves, and never went to war with other nations. The land in this beautiful country was so fertile that it required no tilling, and the rain came down just whenever it was wanted, to moisten the ground and make the seeds grow. One little grain of corn, put into the earth, came up a large plant with a pound's weight of seeds. Great rosy apples, pears, and cherries grew in the hedges, and the blackberries were so plentiful that nobody cared to gather them. There was no such season as winter in this beautiful country; consequently, green-peas, water-cresses, and other luxuries of that kind could be had all the year round.

The King of the country, from having nothing much to do, except fishing for his amusement, became very idle and careless; he was at last almost too lazy to eat his dinner. He had been king for several years at the time of which I am speaking, and I must not omit to tell you of what happened on the night of the day on which he was crowned.

He was just going off to sleep as comfortably as possible, when the window of the room opened of its own accord, and an old woman came sailing in, seated in a basket of burning wood.

“O King!” she said, “your country will be prosperous and happy, so long as you keep the weeds from growing around the back entrance to your palace.”

After these words she twirled her basket three times round, and sailed away in it right through the window. Now the King was rather frightened by what the old woman said, so for a few months he went every morning to see that no weeds were allowed to grow; but after a time he trusted the task to his Prime Minister, who was very particular, and went at least once in two days to examine the gar-

den gate. Soon, he too became careless, and told the head gardener to attend to the business, who in his turn trusted to a young man in his employ. This young fellow, whose name was Bertrand, promised to keep the garden in order, and for some years he did so very faithfully; but one day he fell into a trance, and lay in his bed as still as if he were dead. The head gardener, who left his business to other people, because he had so little to do to make the flowers and plants grow, never heard of Bertrand's strange sleep, and none of his men thought it worth while to tell him. Of course he fancied the garden was neat and orderly, so also did the Prime Minister and the King: while all the time, numbers of weeds were growing. At first, two or three small leaves came through the crevices between the stones; these by degrees increased in number, and became enormous in size, till at length the road to the palace was completely choked up by a large forest of strange trees and unknown shrubs.

When the King at last heard of the extraordinary growth of the plants behind his palace, he was very much alarmed for the safety of his kingdom: so he

took a hundred men, with spades to dig up the trees and plants, and axes and saws to cut them down ; but it was all to no purpose, for when they lopped off a branch, it took root in the earth, and at once became a large tree before their eyes. While the men were at work, great spiders came and spun threads as strong as steel, fastening their spades, saws, and axes to the trees; numbers of owls and bats flew in their faces, and would very soon have blinded them if they had tried to go on with their work. They were obliged to give it up as a bad job; and as they turned to go home, they heard the voice of the old woman calling to them, as she floated about in her flaming basket :

“ In a year and a day, the King shall be either dead or alive.”

Now there was nothing very improbable in this remark, nor was it very alarming; but the King was scarcely able to speak for fear: he did at last manage to ask the old woman for the meaning of her words, whereupon she said,—

“ There is a dragon, my master, who lives in this wood. I am his slave till I die. I shall die to-

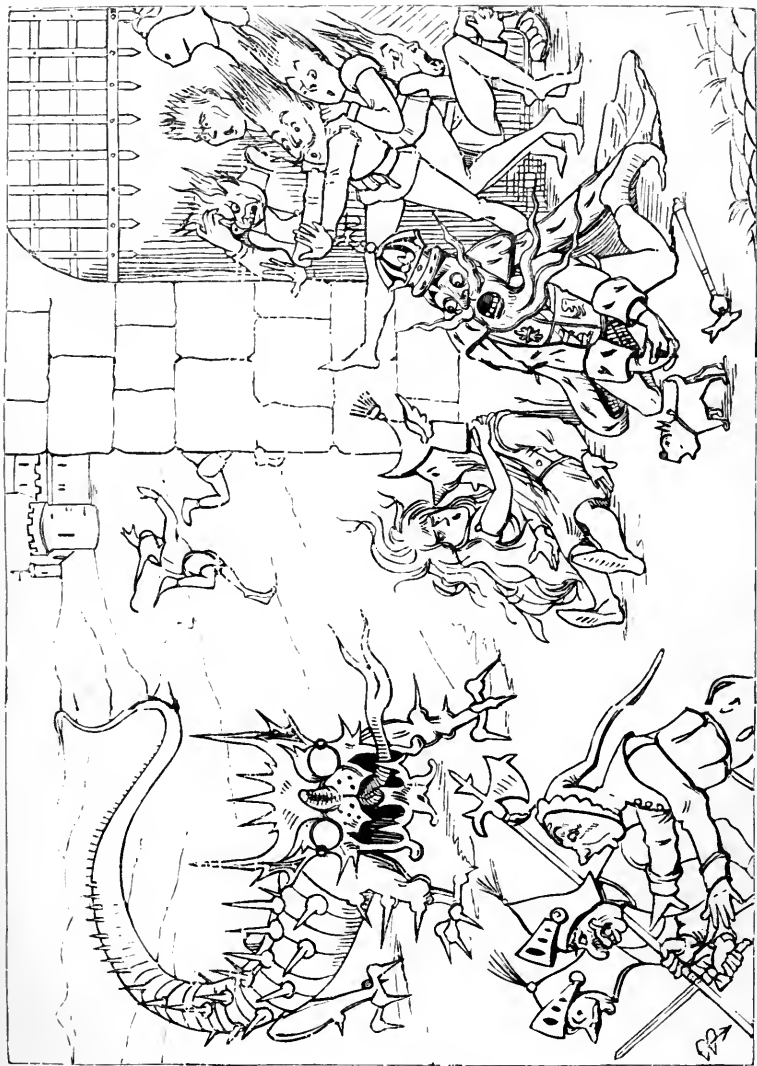
morrow at daybreak, and he will be hungry, with no one to hunt food for him. He will be a curse or a blessing to this kingdom." So saying, she twirled her basket three times round, and flew away in it as before.

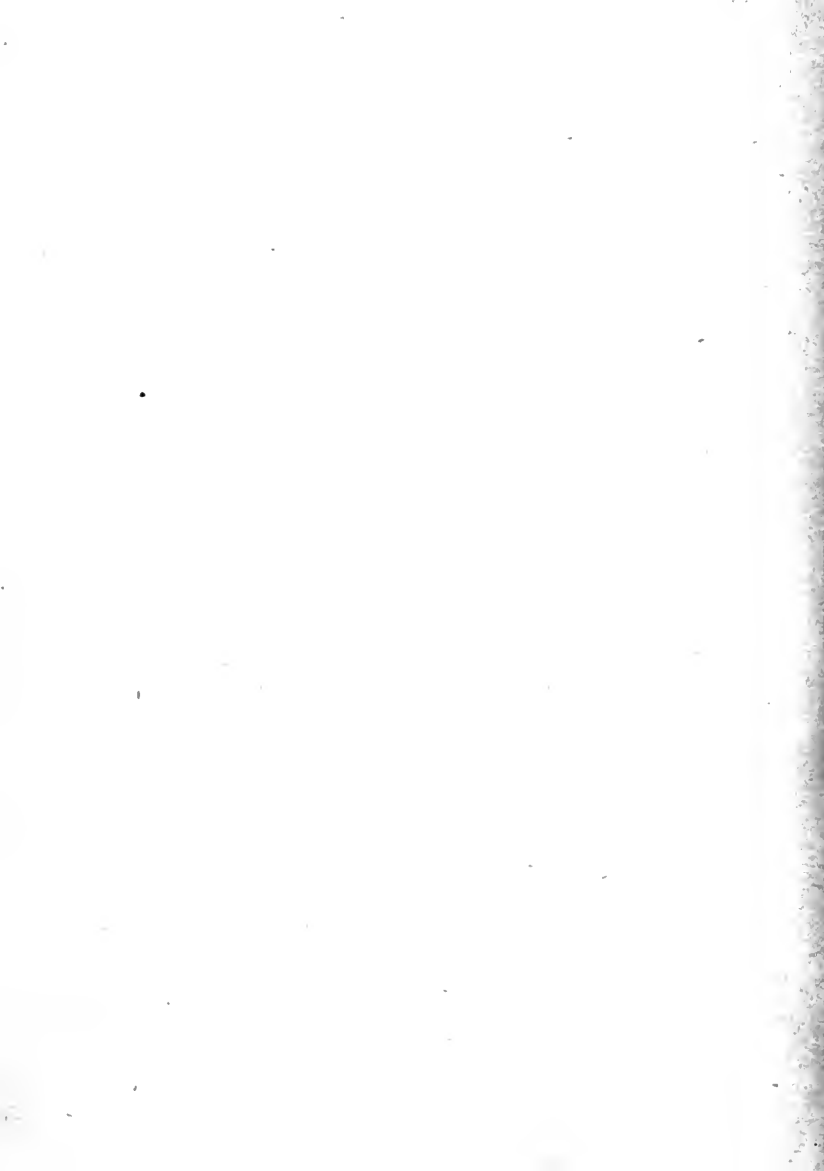
At about the middle of the next day, there was heard a noise like thunder, followed by a rumbling of the earth and a shaking of the trees in the forest, while flame and clouds of smoke filled the air.

"THE DRAGON IS COMING!" shouted every one. "We are lost! we are lost!"

It was too true, the dragon was hungry; his breakfast had not been provided for him as it usually was by the old woman, and he had come to provide for himself. He was a monster terrible to look upon, and, to judge by the size of his mouth, likely to have a good appetite; his body was two hundred feet long, and not unlike that of a serpent, except that it was thicker near the head, and was covered with long, straight, sharp spikes.

The King fell upon his knees, and all the people stood round about with their knees knocking together, and their hair standing on end.



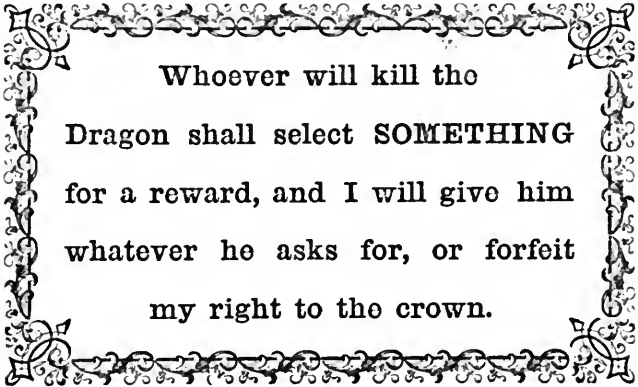


“I require one hundred dozens of oxen,” said the dragon.

These were immediately provided for him, and were at once swallowed up like so many oysters, after which the monster returned to his home in the woods. On the following day, four hundred dozens of sheep went in the same way; and for many weeks the dragon continued his twelve-o'clock demand for something to eat. At first the King, who was very rich, did not so much mind, and he said to his minister, “Just give the dragon a hundred dozens of oxen, or four hundred dozens of sheep; and see that he has something every day.” But after several months the King found that he was getting poorer, and could not afford to buy any more oxen or sheep; so he made dragon taxes, and every one who lived in his country had to pay each week as much as he could afford. The time came when no one had any more money, or oxen, or sheep to spare, and the King told the Prime Minister to ask the Lead-Pencil-in-waiting to write to the dragon, telling him that there was nothing more for him, so that he had better go to some

other country to get his living. But the dragon replied, that he was very comfortable, and that he should not think of going anywhere else; and that they were not to be troubled about the oxen and sheep, as he thought he would like to try a few men and women for a change.

Terrible to relate, at twelve o'clock the next day he seized upon two hundred poor people, and swallowed them whole. Two hundred were eaten by him the following day, and two hundred every day for a long while, till at last the King began to think, "If this goes on much longer, I shall have nobody left to rule over, and perhaps the dragon will even kill *me* for dinner." So he had it proclaimed—



Whoever will kill the
Dragon shall select **SOMETHING**
for a reward, and I will give him
whatever he asks for, or forfeit
my right to the crown.

Every one would have liked the reward, but nobody tried to kill the dragon, although they all knew that before long their turn to be eaten would come in the natural course of events. At last the King became furious because nobody offered to kill the dragon, so he sent for his Prime Minister, and said,—

“It was you who caused this misfortune to me and my country, by not attending to my orders about the garden. It is only fair that you should be punished for it. To-morrow you shall be given to the dragon.”

“Alas! Mighty Sovereign,” said the Minister, “I know that I am in fault, but not alone; if the head gardener had done as I commanded, there would have been nothing wrong.”

“Then he too shall suffer,” said the King.

The head gardener cried out that he had trusted Bertrand.

“Then send for Bertrand; he shall go to the dragon also,” commanded the King; and Bertrand was brought to the palace, still in his slumber. As soon as the King saw him he asked why they did not awake him, and he was answered that they could

not, for he had slept many many months without waking, and that it was his sleep which had caused the misfortune to the kingdom.

“Then,” said the King, “let him be burnt, just as he is.”

So a large fire was prepared, and Bertrand's body was placed upon the top of it; but he was not burnt: for so soon as the flames touched him he awoke, to the surprise of every one. He looked around him, and cried out, “Bring me my spade, and bring me a thousand stonemasons, and a thousand carpenters!”

The King asked, “Why?”

“To kill the dragon,” said Bertrand. “I know all about him; for although I have slept for so long, I have been able to hear all that has been said, and I know all that has taken place.”

So the King ordered a thousand stonemasons and a thousand carpenters to be brought, and told them to obey Bertrand as their master. The young gardener, taking his spade in his hand, went to the back entrance of the palace garden (through which the dragon always came for his dinner), and dug a large hole right in front of the pathway. He then

ordered the thousand stonemasons each to cut a large stone with a round hole in the centre, and the thousand carpenters each to make the step of a staircase with a round hole in it. When every man had prepared his work, Bertrand told them to build a high tower, with a winding staircase; and when they had used up all their materials, and could not build any higher, he made a trap-door of solid lead, and fixed it at the top of the stairs.

The next morning everything was ready, and Bertrand went up to the top of the high tower, all alone. He had not been long up there before he saw the dragon crawling along through the forest, coming for his dinner, and every now and then stopping to polish and sharpen his long spikes. Soon he reached the foot of the tower, and then Bertrand laughed at him, which irritated the dragon so much that he turned from his green colour to a bright red. Bertrand went on laughing so long and so loudly that the dragon could stand it no longer, but crawled up the tower steps, roaring and bawling with a noise as loud as thunder. When he had reached the top, and just as he

thought he should catch Bertrand, the leaden trap-door was shut in his face; and then it was that the long spikes proved his ruin, for they stuck in the holes of the walls and the stairs, and he was caught like a rat in a trap. Perhaps you think that Bertrand was caught too, but he was not;— for the dragon's spikes stuck out so far through the holes in the walls of the tower, that he climbed down by them to the ground, just as the bear at the Zoological Gardens gets down his high pole when he has had as many buns as he can eat. Bertrand chopped off the dragon's tail with his spade; and as it fell away from the body, there was heard a yell more shrill than a hundred railway whistles, and the dragon vanished like a puff of smoke; and so did the forest, the spiders' webs, the owls, and the bats. They all went off bang, and in their place stood all the oxen, all the sheep, and all the people that had been eaten by the dragon.

When the King saw what had taken place, he remembered his promise to reward the person who had saved the country; and calling Bertrand to

the palace, he asked him what thing he would select.

“I select for my reward—nothing; give it to me, or forfeit your right to the crown.”

When the King heard this, he consulted in a whisper with his Prime Minister as to what was to be done, and the Prime Minister’s opinion was this:

“If your Majesty give him nothing, you will not have given him *something* for a reward, as you promised; and if you give him something, you will not have given him *nothing*, which is what he selects: so either way it seems to me that your Majesty will forfeit your right to the crown.”

The King scratched his chin, just like any other person would do if he were puzzled, and said,—

“I think I had better chop off his head; that will be the simplest way to settle the question.”

“But suppose another dragon were to come,” whispered the Prime Minister.

“True,” said the King, “that would be rather awkward. Suppose I create him Knight of the Green Dragon, and pay him a bag of gold every year for keeping the garden free from weeds.”

“I accept those terms,” said Bertrand, who had heard the last part of the speech.

The whole country flourished better than ever, and every one attended to his business for fear that another dragon should come.

THE LONG-TAILED NAG.

ONCE UPON A TIME, the King of the Nova Nowhere Islands was very ill indeed with an attack of the Rosynoseyalia, and this is how it happened. His Majesty had been holding a court where all the great Nova Nowherelanders had assembled to kiss his hand, and everything had taken place just as it should, till towards the end of the day, when a most unfortunate thing happened. Owing to the carelessness of one of the court pages, whose business it was to guard the great window on the staircase, a large blue-bottle fly entered the audience chamber, and after buzzing round the room, settled at last on the King's nose. Every one was astonished at the boldness of the fly; but no one dared to look as if he saw it. Now, it was not etiquette for the King to scratch his nose while the court

was assembled; so he could only shake his head, and screw up his face, of which the blue-bottle took not the slightest notice.

“Where is the royal fly catcher?” cried out the King, in a great rage. “He is *never* in the way when he is wanted!”

Servants were sent to all parts of the palace to find the royal fly catcher, but he was not to be found, and at last it came out that he had gone to his country house, which was ten miles away from the palace. Then the King ordered a trusty messenger to be sent at once on the swiftest horse in the royal stables to fetch the royal fly catcher, with strict orders that he should bring his fly-traps with him.

The Master of the Horse was a little time before he could remember which was the swiftest horse in the stables, and kept the messenger waiting nearly half an hour, while he tried the speed of the horses one against the other. At length there was no doubt that the black nag Birdie with the long tail could go faster than all the others; so the messenger started with whip and spur on the road to the

country house. Scarce had horse and rider gone half a mile, when the messenger's brother, who lived in a house by the roadside, called on him to stop for a minute, and asked him to carry with him a basket of grapes as a present to the royal fly catcher's wife. Who could refuse such a little favour? so Birdie was soon on the road again, with grapes on his back, as well as the rider.

Gallantly they went for another half-mile or so; then the messenger stopped for a moment at the house of his sister, who was very glad to see him, and gave him a bag of oranges to take home for the children—a good large bag, and plenty of fruit in it, but not so very heavy for such a nag as Birdie to carry. On again they went till they arrived at the house of the messenger's father, who was sitting enjoying the sun at his garden gate. Up jumped the old man, and called to his wife,—

“Here is son on a long-tailed nag. Fetch the empty wine pitchers; he will take them on to the village to fill, and leave them here as he comes back.”

Poor messenger, he could not neglect his father's

request; so Birdie was loaded with the three wine pitchers, and trotted on pretty briskly, considering the weight of everything there was to carry.

Things might have turned out well, in spite of the delays; but, unfortunately for the messenger, there lived at a house a little distance farther on the road a man to whom he owed a sum of money which he could not pay. As soon as the creditor saw him coming on the long-tailed nag, he called upon him to stop, and said;—

“My wife and children are going to the village; you must please to help them on the road.”

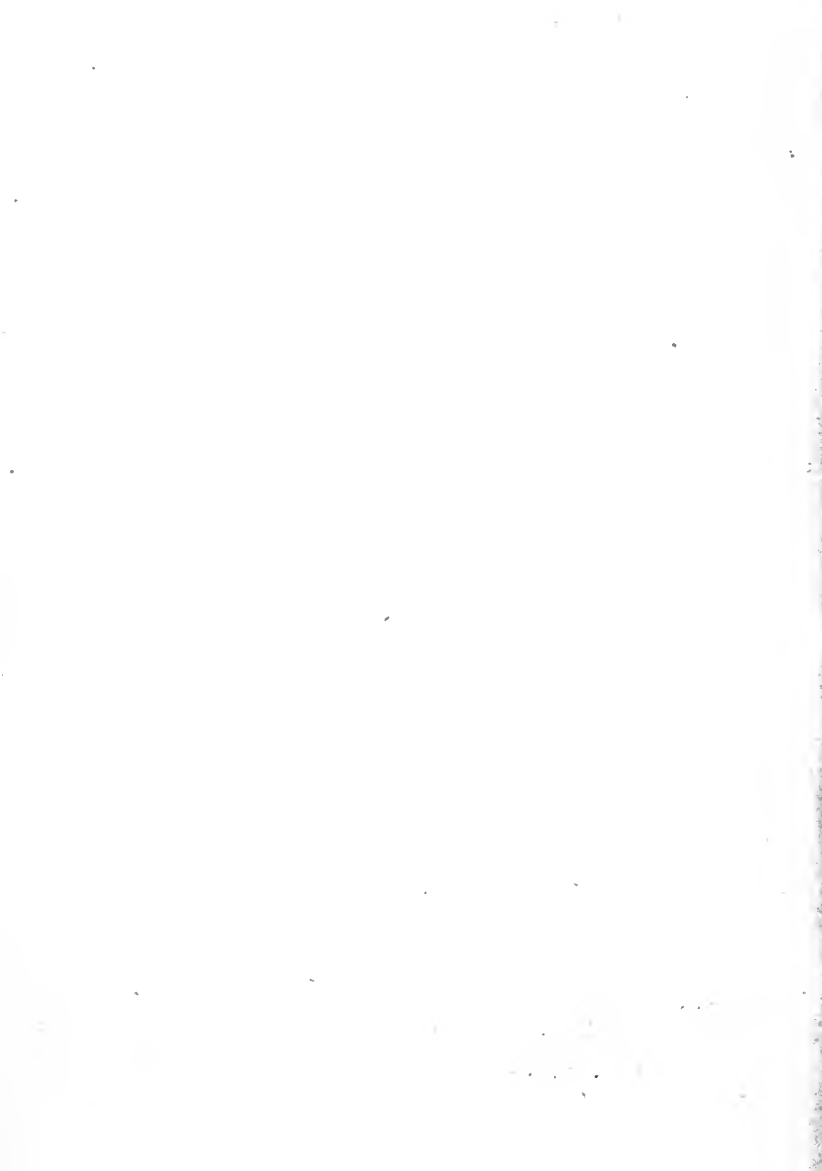
“But,” said the messenger, “my nag is so loaded that I cannot.”

Then replied the hard-dealing man, “You must let them hang on to the nag’s tail behind: if not, you shall pay me the money you owe.”

There was no help for it; so the creditor’s fat wife and children all hung on behind, and poor Birdie had hard work to move at all. Thus they went on for a mile, when the rider found that his nag was becoming tired; so he threw away first the basket of grapes, then the bag of oranges, and lastly the empty



BIRDIE, THE LONG-TAILED NAG.



wine bottles, to lessen the weight. But the creditor's fat wife and the children dragged so heavily that the nag stood still, and would not move. Then the messenger spurred the horse, which made him kick them off; and on again went Birdie like the wind, arriving at the fly catcher's house just as he was sitting down to dinner. The fly-traps were soon baited with sugar, and packed up for the journey, and by the time they reached the palace the King's nose was as red as a rose; for the blue-bottle was still walking about on it. The fly-traps were placed in different parts of the audience chamber, and every one waited to see if the blue-bottle would be caught. The smell of the sugar seemed only to make him more lively; for he crawled about the King's nose more quickly than ever, till at last His Majesty, losing all patience, raised his hand, and knocked my gentleman fly on the floor. Thus it was that the King of the Nova Nowhere Islands became ill with the Rosynoseyalia.

If the long-tailed nag had not been so overloaded, the fly catcher would have been fetched sooner; and if the page who guarded the staircase window

had attended to his business, the blue-bottle would never have entered the palace, in which case the King's nose would not have been tickled, and I should never have written this story for you to read.

TOM AND THE OGRE.

ONCE UPON A TIME, there was a little boy called Tom, who was very fond of sugar ; he liked it indeed so much that he never could keep his hands out of the sugar basin. Tom's father was a pastry-cook, and did not object to his having a moderate number of cakes or tarts, which would have satisfied any but a greedy boy. As a rule, Tom was a very good boy ; but his one fault cost him many an illness, and the doctor was constantly in the house to make him well again. He never took warning from experience ; but even while he was lying unwell in his bed he could think of nothing but sugar, and would sigh, and say, "Oh, how happy I should be if I could live upon nothing but sugar all my life ! Only wait till I grow up, and see how much I will eat." Tom's mother and father

ordered the doctor to give him the nastiest medicine he could afford for the money ; but it was of no use, for no sooner did he get well than he made an attack upon the sugar basin, and of course was taken ill again. One day, Tom (having just recovered from a long sickness, the result of his greediness) was walking in Longstep Lane, catching the bees, to rob them of their honey, as he could not find sugar to steal, when he was rather frightened by seeing a very large and ugly man, who asked him what he was doing.

Tom told him, and the man called him a foolish boy, and promised him sugar every day, as much as he could eat, if he would go with him to his castle at the end of the lane. Tom did not much like the look of the man, but his love of sugar overcame his dislike, and he went with him.

The castle was surrounded by a high wall and a broad ditch full of stagnant water, in which grew numbers of long reeds ; there was but one door, to reach which they had to pass across a large wooden bridge, and this the ugly man pulled on to the bank when they had crossed over.





TOM AND THE OGRE.

“Now, boy, I’ve got you safe,” said the Ogre, for such the ugly man was.

Then he seized Tom by the skirt of his dress, put him under his arm like a bundle of clothes, and walked into the castle, closing the door after him. Tom was too frightened to kick, and quite shivered with fear when he saw in the room which the Ogre entered, a large gridiron, and a stewpan capable of holding an entire ox ; however he had nothing to fear for the present, as the Ogre simply opened the door of a large empty room, and shut Tom in. He, poor fellow, looked round, and saw three or four dozen little boys and girls who appeared to be very miserable and unhappy, although there was a large heap of sugar in the middle of the floor. One of the oldest of the boys came up to Tom, and asked him how long he had been caught.

“Only just now,” said Tom ; “and I wish I had never tasted sugar, because then I should not have come with the old man.”

“Ah ! replied the little boy George, “sugar has been the ruin of all of us, and now we get nothing

else to eat. I wish I had never tasted the nasty stuff."

"Nasty!" said Tom; "you surely don't call sugar nasty."

"Yes I do," answered George, "and so do all of us, and so will you after you have been here a month or two, with nothing else to eat."

"But why does the old man give you nothing else to eat?" asked Tom.

"Because we shall be all the sweeter when he eats us."

"Oh dear! oh dear! shall we be eaten?"

"Yes, I'm afraid so, and the sooner the better; for I'm so tired of eating nothing but sugar, that I don't much care when I am eaten myself."

"But how do you know that the old man eats little boys and girls?" asked Tom.

"Well, we do know it. If you will look through that split panel in the door, you will see a number of big jars on the shelves, with *something* written upon them."

Tom looked, and saw the jars. Some were marked BLACKBOY JAM, and others WHITEBOY JAM. Tom trembled, and looked again.

“Who is that big little boy going up to the shelves?” he asked.

“Is it an ugly big little boy?” said George.

“Yes, very ugly, and very big for a little boy,” replied Tom in a whisper.

“Then it must be the Ogre’s son, and he’s going to steal the jam.”

Sure enough, he was going to steal it; and he placed a chair near the shelf, and mounting on it, opened one of the jars, and began to eat it.

“Won’t he catch it,” cried George, “if the Ogre wakes! and it’s about his time, for I can smell his beef cooking: he always sleeps for an hour before he eats his dinner, and after dinner he takes a pot of jam.”

“What a greedy man he must be, to eat a whole pot of jam!”

“Yes; and you should see the beef he’ll eat to-night; three whole ribs, at least. There! I told you so. The Ogre has caught his son stealing the jam.”

Tom heard a loud crying; looked again through the crack in the panel of the door, and saw that the

Ogre had got his son across his knee, and was—well, any little boy who has been caught stealing the jam will know what took place, so I need not say.

Tom looked again, and saw that the Ogre was getting ready for his supper. The beef was on the table, and after taking a long drink from a large bottle of beer the Ogre devoured every morsel, and nothing was left but the bones. He then had a pot of jam, another long drink, and fell fast asleep in his chair.

“The Ogre seems to be very fond of the beer,” said Tom.

“Yes; and very fond of the jam; which is all the worse for us. But we had better have our supper, and go to sleep.”

So all the little boys and girls ate some sugar, and went to sleep.

Pretty much the same sort of thing took place for the following two or three nights. The Ogre was absent all day, and seldom returned in the evening without one or two little children to lock up in the room. Tom was by this time quite tired of sugar, and would sooner have had a piece of the driest

bread. Every night the children watched through the crack in the door, and longed for a slice of the beef or bread which the Ogre devoured. One day, Tom, who had been thinking a great deal, called George apart from the others, and said to him,—

“If you will help me, George, I think we shall be able to get some of the beef. To-night, when the Ogre is asleep, we will try and force open the cracked panel in the door: I think it will give way if we and all the others push together.”

The children anxiously awaited the return of the Ogre, who, as usual, put his ribs of beef to roast, and fell asleep while the meat was cooking.

No sooner did the hissing and spluttering, and the delicious smell of the browning, come to their ears and nostrils, than they pushed with such good will at the cracked panel, that the lower nails gave way to the pressure, and although it still held fast at the top, they were able to swing it forward for more than a foot. Tom and George crept through the opening, but were terrified to see that the Ogre's big little boy was sitting up in his bed wide awake.

Quick as thought, Tom jumped back to the room

which he had just left, and filling his hands with large lumps of sugar, he gave them to the Ogre's child. This quieted him ; so Tom and George lost no time in carrying the beef between them back to the hungry children, who soon polished the bones.

“Now,” said Tom, “when the Ogre wakes he'll want his supper, and the best thing we can do is to make him believe he's had it.”

So Tom returned once more to the Ogre's room, and going up to the chair where their enemy slept, he rubbed the greasy bones across the Ogre's lips, and put a few crumbs of bread on his beard. Then he got back to his own room as fast as possible, and pulling the loose panel after him, watched to see what the Ogre would do. A few moments, and he awoke, and stared hard as the bare bones met his eye.

He shook his head, as if he was not quite satisfied, but tasting the grease on his lips, and seeing the crumbs of bread, he was forced to believe that he did not feel hungry ; however, to make sure, he took three large pots of blackbcy jam, an extra jug of beer, and fell fast asleep.

“Now is our time,” said Tom. “Follow me quietly, but first take off your boots; carry them with you, for I hope you will require them.”

Tom pushed open the broken panel in the door, and led the way, all the children following, through the Ogre’s room, into the outer passage, where they found a window left open. They lost no time in helping one another through it, and had soon reached the place of the wooden bridge. It was hard work to get this across, but they managed it at last, and were soon running for their lives down Longstep Lane. Tom’s father and mother took them all in for the night, and the next day the hearts of many parents were made glad by the return of their lost children.

But Tom had not done with the Ogre. As he had tricked him once, he thought he might be able to do so again, and asked his father to help him. Accordingly, they took a number of large sponges, which they soaked in syrup and butter, dusted over with flour, and browned in the oven. These new-fashioned cakes they then hung to the trees in Longstep Lane, so that when next the Ogre

came that way he could not avoid seeing them. Just as they thought it would happen, so it took place. The Ogre and his big little boy soon smelt out the syrup and butter, picked the new-fashioned sponge-cakes, ate as many as they could swallow, were taken very ill, went home, and died.

I am rather glad to think that this was the last Ogre who ever lived, especially as I know of certain little boys and girls who are in the habit of stealing the sugar.

THE THREE ONE-LEGGED MEN.

ONCE UPON A TIME, you might have seen a man with a wooden leg, walking along a dusty road. His long beard and moustache, his fierce eyebrows, the bend in his back, and the way he turned out his five toes, would have proved to any one who felt inclined to doubt the fact, that he was an old soldier. For all that he held his chin so high, he was tired and footsore, not so tired as you or I would have been if we had either of us walked so great a distance as he had, because you see he had only one leg to tire; yet he was glad when he came to the foot of a great oak tree—glad enough to take off his wooden leg, and lie down to sleep. Soon he snored, and the Emperor's trumpeters could not have awakened him.

Down the road came another man with a wooden

leg, also an old soldier, to judge by his bearing. He came as far as the tree, saw the other man lying there, unstrapped his own wooden leg, placed it beside him, and was soon snoring as loudly as the other.

Down the road again came still another old soldier with a wooden leg, walking more slowly than the others, for he was blind. On his shoulder was perched a magpie, which chattered and talked in bird tongue to his poor old master, who seemed almost to understand the language.

It is certain that the bird comprehended the man; for he jumped from one shoulder to the other, just as he was told.

When the old soldier reached the shadow of the oak tree, the magpie hopped to the ground, and led the way, chattering to his master, who followed the sound.

Soon his leg was unfastened—the wooden one I mean of course—and soon he was as fast asleep as the other two.

Then Dandie flew away in search of food.

Down the road there came another man (two



THE FIGHT FOR THE WOODEN LEG.

legged) in rags and tatters, with sharp piercing eyes looking quickly from right to left, and back again from left to right. When he spied out the three men sleeping, he stopped to look at them. This ragged, tattered man was a thief, so he quickly made up his mind to steal the wooden legs, as he saw nothing better worth taking.

He seized two of them, and was about to take the third, when the magpie returning, called out, "Stop thief! stop thief!" and away he ran with the two wooden legs under his arm.

The first old soldier awoke, saw two men sleeping, and one wooden leg, which he was about to fit on to his stump; when the second old soldier awoke also, and snatched it from him. The first snatched it back again, and presently they were fighting hard for the possession of the wooden leg.

"It is mine," shouted the first old soldier, pointing with one hand to his stump.

The second shook his head in a determined manner, and pointed to his stump, but said nothing. Then they tussled for it again as hard as they could manage with only one leg apiece. Over

and over they rolled, right on to the blind old soldier, who seized the wooden leg, and struggled for it as bravely as either of the others, crying out, "The leg is mine, the leg is mine! without it I shall perish, for I am blind." Neither would leave his hold of the wooden-leg, and the battle lasted for nearly an hour, when all three of them rested to take breath.

Then the first old soldier cried out,—

"We are three old fools to be fighting for one wooden leg. Some one must have stolen the other two; for it is certain there must have been more than one, to carry three one-legged men all to this place. Blind man, can you speak with your fingers? for I am deaf, and cannot hear your voice." The blind man shook his head; but the second old soldier, who had been listening, answered with his hands,—

"I speak with my fingers, for I am dumb."

The three poor cripples soon understood each other: one was deaf, one was dumb, and the other blind, yet each could understand the meaning of the other two. If the dumb man spoke with his hands, the blind man could not see what he said, but the deaf man could tell him. So, if the deaf man





QUITE A JOLLY PARTY; OR,
THE DEAF MAN,
THE DUMB MAN,
THE BLIND MAN,
AND DANDIE.

spoke to the blind man, he used his tongue ; while, if he spoke to the dumb man, he used his fingers. They talked for a while, and agreed that it was a strange chance which had brought them together ; but they could not decide who was to have the one wooden leg. When they were tired of arguing the question, they agreed that the best thing to do would be for them to travel on in company, and wear the leg by turns ; so off they started arm-in-arm, the blind man in the centre with two legs, and the others hopping one on each side of him. The magpie hopped before, and, all things considered, they formed a very jolly party.

No body can go for any great distance along a dusty road without coming to an inn, but it is not everybody who comes across such a comfortable one as the Old Saracen's Head. So thought our four travellers, the three men and the magpie, when they found themselves inside, with a good supper before them. Moreover, it is not every inn that has four such strange guests ; and so thought Thomas Magister the landlord.

“ Wonders will never cease,” he exclaimed as they

entered. "Yesterday morning the Earl's daughter puts up here to escape a thunder-storm, and steals my golden goblet; and this evening I have four such guests as I never had before. I do believe the world is coming to an end."

"Stranger things might happen yet, good landlord," said the blind man; "for you might get your cup back again."

"Nay," said the landlord, "that can never be; for I dare not accuse the Earl's daughter of the theft: her father has the first right in my house and lands; he would ruin me if I claimed my goblet."

"What is the worth of the cup?" asked the blind man.

"The worth! oh, three times its weight in gold, that is the worth to me, and that is the price I will pay to recover it."

"It is a golden cup, landlord, is it not? and yet worth three times its weight in gold; how can that be?"

"Easily enough, blind man, easily enough. Pour water into my goblet, and it becomes ale; pour ale, and it becomes wine—if you only wish so."

“What happens if you pour wine into it?”

“The wine becomes water.”

“Well, tell me where the Earl’s daughter lives, and we three and the magpie will get your cup for you, if you will only pay the price you name for it.”

“Willingly,” replied Thomas Magister; “you shall have the money and my thanks into the bargain.”

The one-legged men lost no time the next morning, but started early for the Earl’s castle.

The deaf man had the wooden leg, and the others hopped beside him, all three arm-in-arm.

The blind man and the dumb man waited outside the castle, the deaf man crossed the draw-bridge, and boldly entered the gateway. The fat porter, who was scarcely awake, nodded and allowed him to pass in, because he was too sleepy to trouble to hinder him. Thus it was that the deaf man found himself in the presence of the Earl’s daughter, as she was seated at breakfast with her ladies.

“Good morrow, fair lady,” said the deaf man; “although I am deaf, I have heard of your lady-

ship, and I have called to know if I may teach you to speak with your hands; it is worth knowing how to do so, for when you are old you may lose your hearing as I have done."

The Earl's daughter was delighted, nodded her head for him to begin, and soon she had learnt the deaf and dumb alphabet by heart.

"What shall be your reward, good deaf man, for teaching me?" spelt out the Earl's daughter with her fingers.

"Only a drink of water, my lady; but it must be from a golden cup."

"He shall drink from my new cup;" and turning to one of her ladies-in-waiting, she pointed to a golden goblet which stood among many others on a shelf in an old-fashioned cabinet. "Fill it with water, and give it to the deaf man."

The deaf man took the cup, wished for ale, and found that it contained as good ale as he had ever tasted.

The Earl's daughter returned the goblet to the shelf, and locked the cabinet, placing the key in her pocket.

The deaf man saw there was no chance of getting the cup, so he spelt, "Good morrow to you, my lady;" and leaving the castle, returned to his two companions, to whom he related his experience.

The dumb man next putting on the wooden leg, entered the castle walls, and found the Earl's daughter seated at her dinner with her ladies-in-waiting. He bowed to the ground, and speaking with his fingers, told her ladyship that he had something to say, which she would wish to hear.

"What is it?" asked the Earl's daughter, speaking on her fingers; "you are the second deaf man with a wooden leg who has been here."

"If your ladyship will give me a cup of ale, I will tell you; only one cup of ale, out of your own goblet."

"Certainly, two if you wish it," spelt the Earl's daughter."

The dumb man took the cup of ale, wished, and it was good wine to his taste.

"Now what have you to tell me?"

"That your ladyship had better keep a good

watch on your golden cups to-night, as there are thieves not far off."

"Thank you, good man; I will take care to carry the key of the cabinet to my room to-night, and it will be hard if they take it from under my pillow without awakening me." This she spelt with her hands. Then she turned to her ladies-in-waiting, and laughing said, "It strikes me that this deaf man is one of the thieves; so I shall leave the key in the cabinet to-night, where they will scarcely think of looking for it." She little thought that every word she said was heard by the man whom she supposed to be deaf, just because he had one wooden leg, and spoke with his fingers.

The dumb man returned to his two companions, told them what he had heard, and they all agreed that the blind man would have a difficult task before him, as his visit to the castle would be the only chance of getting the cup.

The wooden leg changed wearer for the second time, and in the evening the blind man and his magpie stood outside the castle gate.

"Now, Dandie," said his master, "in you go as

quick as may be." In flew the magpie, chattering and making a tremendous noise. The blind man ran after him—yes, actually ran, for he followed the sound, and knew that Dandie was too clever to lead him where he would stumble over anything.

"O Dandie, Dandie!" cried the blind man; "Dandie, where are you going?"

The porter at the gate was fast asleep by this time, quite tired with doing nothing, which is really the hardest work I know of, next to doing something. So there was no one to stop Dandie and his master from going to the room where the Earl's daughter was eating her supper with her ladies-in-waiting.

All the ladies laughed at the blind man running after his bird. So he stopped, and said, "Good evening, fair ladies; pity a blind man with one wooden leg and a magpie who is so wicked, that if he smells cheese nothing will keep him from it."

"Let the bird have some cheese," said the Earl's daughter. "Ah! by my faith, he is helping himself."

This was true enough, for Dandie was hopping with a large lump, right from the middle of the

cheese; and having perched himself on his master's knee, he made very easy work of eating it.

"Just a crumb or two for master," whispered the old soldier, and Dandie quietly dropped a piece into his hand.

"Lady, a cup of wine for an old soldier who has lost a leg and two eyes—just a cup of wine."

The wine was given him, and it tasted like clear water; so the blind man knew he was drinking from the right cup, and rubbed the piece of cheese which Dandie had given him on the bottom part of the stem. Then he returned it to the Earl's daughter, who said, "Blind man, tell me your history to earn your cup of wine."

"My history is not very wonderful, my lady; but I will tell it to you."

THIS WAS THE BLIND MAN'S STORY.

"ONCE upon a time, I had two legs to walk upon, and two eyes to see with, or else I should never have been a soldier. Perhaps if I had only had one leg when I was a boy, I should now have both my eyes. But one never knows what will happen

until after it has taken place; so I will go on with my story.

“When I was twenty-one years old, my father wished me to go for a soldier, as he was tired of keeping me, and I did not earn my own living. I thought it was very hard that I should have to leave my comfortable home, but there was no help for it; and when I found myself able to march as well as any one of my companions, looking so brave and smart in my red coat, I was quite content.

“Soon we were ordered to go to the wars, and in the first battle I lost the sight of my eyes, from a sword-cut across my forehead. I was left at a farmhouse to be taken care of while I recovered from my illness, and my regiment went with the rest of the army to follow the enemy. The old farmer and his wife treated me very kindly as long as my countrymen were in the neighbourhood; but after they had gone they gave me nothing but hard words, and the poorest food.

“I should have been very badly off if Dandie the magpie had not been kinder than the farmer and his wife; many is the odd bone and piece of bread

that he got for me, and ere long we began to understand each other quite well.

“Dandie belonged to no one in particular, but was welcome wherever he went—out of one house into another, all day long, picking up crumbs and little pieces everywhere. Each day at dinner-time he would come to the door of the farmer’s house, and chatter away till I came out, when he would hop off, calling me to follow him right down to the bottom of the garden; there I should find a heap of food—bread, meat, cheese, pudding, all in small pieces—which Dandie had kept for me.

“How anxiously I waited day after day for the return of my regiment! for the captain had promised to fetch me, and take me home to my country. But they never came, and the farmer and his wife got tired of having me, and used often to talk quietly together about me. I was sorry to stop with them against their wish; but what could I do, a poor blind man in a strange country?

“They became more cruel to me every day, and at last, one morning as I was walking slowly round the garden, they came quietly behind me, and seizing

me before I was aware of it, threw me down an old well. I lay stunned for I know not how long ; when I recovered my senses, I found that my leg was broken, and that I could not move without great pain.

“The well was nearly dry, there being not more than a foot or so of water at the bottom. I was glad enough of that little ; I drank some, and bathed my temples. I gave myself up for lost, and bowed my head to await my fate.

“Presently something fell upon me. It was a piece of cheese ; and I felt sure that Dandie had found out where I was. I called, Dandie ! Dandie ! and heard a chattering and fluttering over the top of the well, while another piece of food was dropped down to me. In short, I very soon had a good meal, and felt some hope ; but I could not think what I should do to get out of the well.

“While I was thinking, something else fell upon me. This time it was a little twig of wood, which I threw on one side ; then came another twig, another, and another, and then they came down by dozens. What did it mean ? had Dandie become mischievous ?

did he wish to cover me up with little pieces of wood? I heard the fluttering of many wings, for Dandie and numbers of other birds of all sorts were there, all dropping twigs of wood upon me. I had quick work to manage to keep myself clear of them. For hours and hours Dandie and the other birds continued their work, and suddenly I saw the meaning of it all. The well was being filled up with twigs, and I was gradually being raised nearer and nearer to the top. Before night-time I was level with the mouth of the well, and Dandie came and perched upon my shoulder. After he had rested a while to recover from the fatigue of his hard day's work, he chattered to me and hopped off. I followed him as best I could crawl, for what else could I do? Through the garden gate he led me, up the village, to the door of the doctor's house, where I knocked many times before it was opened to me. My leg was very painful, and the doctor, who was a kind-hearted man, took me in, and set it for me; but by the morning I was very ill indeed, and my leg had to be cut off to save my life.

“After a time I got better; my regiment returned;

my captain brought me back to my own country, and I brought Dandie with me. We have passed through many adventures since then, and to-night, with your permission, good lady, we shall sleep under the table in this room. And that is the end of my story," said the blind man.

* * * * *

"Quite an interesting story," said the Earl's daughter; "if it had been much longer, I should have forgotten the beginning by the time you reached the end. Dandie is a very clever bird, and in the morning perhaps I will buy him of you."

"You say right when you say perhaps, my lady, for perhaps I won't sell him, and perhaps in the morning he won't be here to buy."

"Oh! but you know you can sleep here for the night, blind man, and your bird with you. Good night to you both." With these words the lady retired for the night—the lights were put out, and the blind man and Dandie were left to sleep under the table.

At about midnight, the magpie tapped his

master on the nose to awaken him, and they both listened to hear if all the inmates of the castle were asleep. Being satisfied that they were, the blind man felt with his hand along the floor, to try which way the cracks in the boards ran. He knew that the cabinet which contained the golden goblets was placed facing the side of the wall where the boards ran crossways, because he had heard the shoes of the lady-in-waiting scraping against the divisions between the wood as she walked towards it. This little bit of knowledge saved him some trouble in finding the cabinet, and very many minutes had not gone by, before he had turned the key in the lock, and was feeling about on the shelves. There were golden goblets wherever he placed his hands, and it would not do to take the wrong one; so in almost a whisper he called the magpie to him, and said,—

“Dandie, boy! there’s a cheese in the cupboard; find it, boy!”

Dandie was up in a moment, and he certainly smelt cheese, as well he might; for, as I mentioned before, the blind man had rubbed some on the stem

of the landlord's goblet, and the bird soon found out which it was, and pecked hard at it. This was enough for the blind man; the sound guided him to the exact position of the cup, which he placed inside his pocket. Dandie led the way, and his master followed, past the fat porter at the gate, and down the road to the Old Saracen's Head. The blind man could find his way at night-time just as well as by day, for each was equally dark to him.

Thomas Magister was not in bed, nor were the two old soldiers; and when the blind man entered with the cup in his hand, they all three jumped with delight. The landlord, because the cup was restored, and the others because of the gold they were to share together. Many times was the goblet filled that night, or, perhaps I ought to say that morning.

The three one-legged men were happy, for now they could buy a dozen wooden legs apiece if they had a mind to; but they preferred to hop on together; and the strangeness of their appearance induced people to give them money and food, so

that in a few months' time they were able to separate and retire in comfort—each to his native village.

Dandie is as fond as ever of cheese—of which he has a large slice for supper every evening.

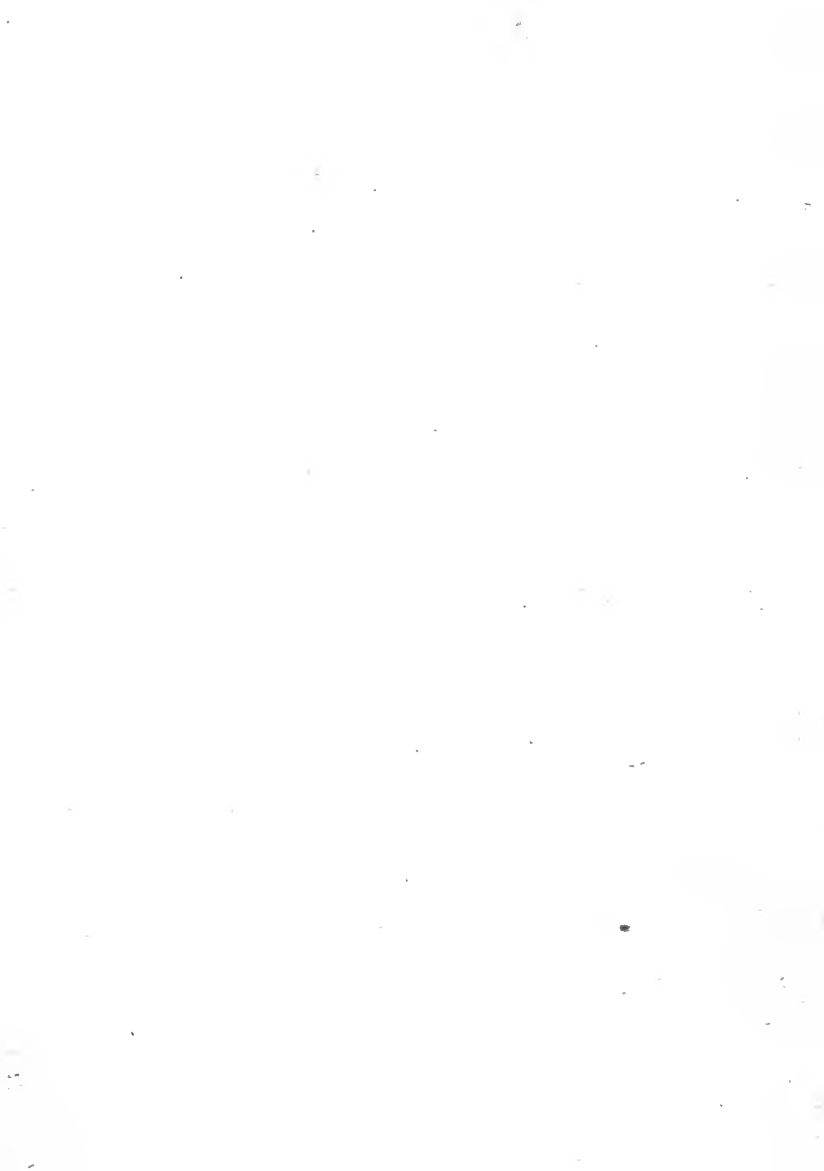
THE PIMPLE ON A NOSE.

ONCE UPON A TIME, there were numbers of people, living in a country of which I shall some day tell you a great deal that you will be pleased to hear. These people were divided into two classes, those who had pimples on their noses, and those who had not. The two sorts of people were perfectly alike in all other respects; they lived in houses of the same kind, ate the same sort of food, and wore the same fashion of dress, but they never spoke to one another when they could help it. It was not considered a nice thing to have a pimple on your nose, and every one who had was looked down upon by any one who had not. When the people without a pimple gave a party, they never invited any of the other sort, unless they were very rich indeed, and then they were not very polite to them. If I had

had a pimple on my nose, and any one had been impolite to me, I should have stopped away from his house; but then every one does not think alike, which is perhaps a good thing.

There lived in this country a young man named Alberto, who was very handsome, very clever, and very rich, and every one was very fond of him, because he was so clever, rich, and handsome, and because he had no pimple on his nose. He lived in a beautiful large house, gave grand parties, to which every one without a pimple on his nose was invited, and he was a great favourite with all the young ladies who were on the look-out for a husband. At one of his quadrille parties he danced with a beautiful young lady named Bella, fell in love with her, and asked her to marry him. Her papa and mama were very pleased to hear of it, and gave their consent at once; so everything was arranged for a grand wedding; and every one who knew them was invited to see the marriage, and to eat cake and drink wine, and talk about the young couple.

The bride was dressed in a white satin robe, covered with pearls and lace, with a rich lace scarf





hanging from her head right down to the ground ; she rode to the church with her papa, in a grand glass carriage, drawn by two white horses, and was as happy as could be. Just as they reached the church door, an ugly old man, selling spectacles, came to the window of the carriage, and said,—

“Please to buy my spectacles; I make them myself, and I know how wonderful they are; if you wear a pair of them, you will be able to see everything bad of everybody.”

Bella's father bought a pair, and, putting them on, he handed his daughter out of the carriage, and led her into the church, while all the little boys in the crowd huzzaed as loudly as they could.

Alberto was there waiting for his bride, and every one was ready to see them married, when Bella's father called out,—

“Stop! stop! he has a pimple on his nose; I can see it with my new spectacles. No man with a pimple on his nose shall marry my daughter.”

Bella was carried out of the church, fainting, and every one talked about the lucky escape the poor girl had had. As for Alberto, nobody would look

at him, and he went home very, very sad. His fine house gave him no pleasure, and he did not care whether he was rich or poor, but sat all the long day shut up in his room, thinking how wretched he was. At night there was a gentle knock at the door, and the old man with the spectacles crept into the room.

“Who is there?” said Alberto.

“Scandalus, the spectacle maker, has come to see you,” replied the old man, in a squeaky voice.

“Then begone, Scandalus. But for you, I should have been happy now, instead of miserable, as I am.”

“Well, well, then,” said Scandalus, “I am very sorry for you; but I must sell my spectacles, you know. Cheer up, and buy a pair yourself; they are very useful, very wonderful, and cheap at any price; for with them you can see anything bad of anybody.”

“But,” replied Alberto, “I don’t wish to know anything bad of anybody, and I won’t buy your spectacles.”

“Just try on a pair, only for a minute: I know they will suit your sight.”

“Well, then, I will try them on; but I don’t wish to buy them.” So Alberto put on a pair, and could see quite distinctly, although he thought things looked a little twisted; but when he tried to take them off again, he could not; so he was forced to keep them against his will. Scandalus was delighted and danced with joy when he was paid for them, to think that he had sold another pair. He bowed very politely, rubbed his hands together, and crept quietly out of the house.

Alberto soon forgot all about the old man and his spectacles; he sat up all night writing a farewell letter to Bella, and had not finished by the morning, when he heard a rattling of carriage wheels and a loud knock at his door. It was Bella’s father, who had come to return the presents and letters which Alberto had sent to his daughter, and to demand all her letters and presents from him.

As soon as he entered the room, Alberto nearly fell down on the floor with surprise; for there on the nose of the old gentleman he distinctly saw *a pimple*. There was no doubt about it; and the old gentleman confessed with tears of sorrow,

that he was glad it was found out, for now the marriage could take place, and every one would be happy.

So it did, and so they were, and the spectacles dropped off their noses on the wedding day.

THE QUARRELSOME CHICKEN.

ONCE UPON A TIME, there were a number of chickens who never had any mothers at all. When the eggs from which they came were first laid in a beautiful straw nest, at a farmhouse in Yorkshire, the hen that laid them was robbed by the master's servant, and they were sold to be sent to London, where some one had found out how to hatch chickens by steam. Thus the little chicks who ought to have come from the shell in Yorkshire, where no one would have thought anything of them, had the good fortune to be brought to London, put in an oven, kept nice and warm, and shown to a number of people, who paid money to be allowed to see them hatched. Now, most of the ladies and gentlemen who went to see the exhibition, lived in houses without gardens, and of course they could

not keep fowls ; so they were delighted to see the little ragged-looking chickens cracking their shells, and poking out their wee yellow beaks. The little girls and boys who went to see them would say, "How wonderful ! how pretty ! what dear tiny things !"

One of the chickens of which I am telling you, while he was inside the shell, thought to himself, "I only wish I could get out of this ; it is so very hot and uncomfortable, and I seem to be growing larger and larger every day : whatever will become of me I don't know." Truly, it seemed to him that unless he did something or other he would certainly die, so he set to work and pecked away with his beak for a long time without doing any good ; but at length the shell cracked, and a little piece fell away, so that he could just put one eye to the hole, and see outside. Then, after a little rest—for he was not strong, and soon became tired—he went to work again, and broke off a larger piece, so that he was able to put out the whole of his head. At last, after a great deal of trouble and hard work, he managed to get out altogether, and was immedi-

ately wrapped in flannel by the person who had charge of the oven. All the chicks lived together very happily, and were fed upon meal and grits, and all sorts of nice food that chickens are most fond of. But I am sorry to say that the chick I have been speaking about, became so vain from hearing people say, "What a sweet little dear!" that he began to be rude to the others, and called them *common birds*, and other ugly names. In particular he used to annoy one little chick who was not so fortunate as the others, for he had *no tail feathers*. This poor little chick, who was a very quiet, good little bird, for some time took no notice of his cruel words, but after a while he thought he could not bear it longer; so one day he said to the proud and quarrelsome chicken,—

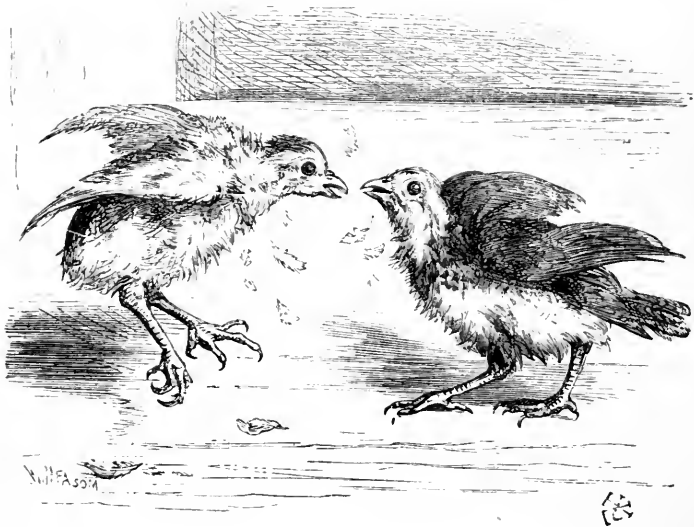
"I am very sorry that I have no tail, and I would give anything to have one, but I do not choose to have you always telling me about it; so if you are not more polite to me for the future I shall fight you."

"Then you had better begin at once," said the proud chicken (for he did not like to be spoken to

in this manner before the other chickens), "you had better begin at once: you are a good-for-nothing chicken without a tail."

As soon as these words were spoken he was sorry for what he said, because, being a coward, he did not want to fight; but it was too late. The little chicken without a tail rushed at him, knocked him over two or three times, and seemed so enraged that the cowardly quarrelsome chicken ran away as fast as he could, tumbled over the edge of the box in which they lived, fell on to the stone floor, and broke his leg.

He was ill for a long time afterwards, and still walks lame; but latterly he has been very friendly towards the chicken without a tail.



THE QUARRELSOME CHICKEN,
AND
THE CHICKEN WITHOUT A TAIL.

[Page 170.]



THE ADVENTURES OF JOHN THE SON OF
JACK THE GIANT KILLER.

ONCE UPON A TIME, young John the son of Jack the Giant Killer read an account of the adventures his father had had when he was young; so he resolved to do something grand himself. He knew of a certain giant living in a log hut in the centre of a thick wood, a very old giant, but still a very savage one, and a terror to the people of the neighbourhood. This giant was continually taking folks as prisoners, and locking them up in a deep cave at the back of his hut; and on this account young John determined to kill him. He started off with his father's sword, and before long reached the outskirts of the wood, where he spied the giant's hut, but dared not enter while it was daylight; so he sat down to think matters over and arrange his plans of action.

When the moon began to show above the hill-top, John the giant killer (as he hoped to be called) knocked at the door with the sword handle, and entered boldly. The giant was in a great rage, for he had been put out of temper that day by a corn on his toe; so when John bowed politely to the giant, he only had a frown and a growl in return, with a surly question as to who he was, and what he wanted there.

"My name is John," was the reply, "and I have come to look about me."

"Well then, get out; I hate Johns and Jacks; they always remind me of that horrible Jack the Giant Killer."

"Oh! then," said John, "you have heard of Jack the Giant Killer."

"I should rather think I have," answered the giant.

"Well then, you'll be pleased to hear that I am his son, and I am just starting in the same line of business myself."

"Why can't you go away?" blubbered the giant, "go away, and leave a poor old party alone. I never

hurt you. How would you like me to come and annoy you?"

"That's nothing to do with the question," said John; "I intend to put an end to you, but not to-night, as I have something else to do. Any time to-morrow we can see who is the best man."

"You leave me alone," cried the old giant, "you would not dare to hit me if I were only as little as you are."

"I am not going to hit you, or do anything so cowardly," replied John, "I'm coming here to-morrow to have a regular trial of skill; if you come to grief, it will be your own fault. You shall name what the trial is to be; so I think nothing can be fairer."

"Oh! well! I suppose it's no use trying to get out of it, and the sooner it's decided the better for both of us; but mind, Mr. John, if you can't do what I wish, it's all up with *you*."

"All right; what shall I have to do on my part?" and John was all attention.

"You shall take my hatchet, and cut down the

thickest tree in the woods at one blow ; if you fail, you are to suffer death."

"How shall I find the thickest tree, giant?"

"Oh! I'll find it for you easily enough, my boy ; I ought to know it, for I sleep underneath it every afternoon when the sun is hot."

"Very good, giant, I agree ; and if you on your part can cut down the thinnest tree with six blows from my hatchet, you shall be spared, otherwise you shall suffer death. We quite understand each other, and in the morning you shall see me."

John, after this arrangement, walked out of the giant's hut, and thought within himself, "Now I have a very difficult task to perform to-morrow ; I must go and see this tree. The giant would not tell me at what part of the forest it grows ; but he said that he goes there every afternoon when the sun is hot, so I will follow the path where the grass is most trodden down." This was a capital idea of John's ; it showed that he had his wits about him, and more than that, it really was the means of his finding the tree, which was a very, very thick one. He was sure it was the right tree, for he saw that the weeds,

plants, and even the earth itself, had been flattened down on one side of it, where the giant had rested for the sake of the shade.

John very soon decided as to what he would do, and drawing his father's sword from its sheath, he felt the edge, which was all notched from the hard fighting it had gone through; he tried if he could use it for a saw, and was very pleased to find that it worked beautifully. It did not take him much time to saw through the stem of the big tree, all except a little thickness on one side, which was strong enough to hold the tree upright, and keep it from falling. Then he turned homeward, and after a good supper went to bed and slept soundly.

In the morning John at once commenced his preparations for his visit to the giant; he took a slate from the roof of his father's house, and forming it into the shape of a hatchet head, fixed it to a handle, and took it with him.

To make short a long story, I will tell you how that John gave one swinging cut with the giant's hatchet, just where he had stopped sawing the trunk, and down the tree fell with a tremendous

crash. Then the giant took John's hatchet, and gave so strong a blow to the thinnest tree, that the slate was smashed to pieces, and the tree still stood in its place.

"Your life is mine," said John, "but if you will liberate the people you have taken prisoners, I will let you live another day, and give you another chance."

"Thank you, Mr. John," said the giant, who was now very civil; "I think it is very kind of you. Here is the key of the cave behind my hut: you will find the people there. I never eat people now, because my teeth have all fallen out; so you will find them all right."

"Then why do you take them prisoners?"

"It's the only way I have to amuse myself. But please let me off the other trial; I am getting very old, and shall not do much more harm to any one."

"Not if I know it," said John, "to-morrow we must have another trial of skill. I propose that we try who can eat the most hard-boiled eggs; you shall find eggs for me to eat, and I will find eggs for you."

“Agreed,” said the giant, “my eggs shall boil all night; I warrant they will be hard enough by the morning.”

“As hard as you please, giant. So now that we understand each other, I will go and liberate the prisoners, and then go back to father’s house.”

John opened the door of the cave, and the poor prisoners ran to their homes as fast as they could go, never stopping to look behind them.

When John went to the hut in the morning, he took with him six bladders of lard, and giving them to the giant, said,—

“My eggs are not quite hard yet, so put them in the pot to boil, and give me those which I am to eat; I will just take one to start with, and eat the others when you are ready to begin.”

After a little time John said to the giant,—

“Take the eggs out of the pot, and eat them, if you can.”

The giant opened the lid of the pot, and saw nothing but water inside, for the heat had melted the bladders of lard.

“Spare me,” said the giant, who did not under-

stand it at all. "Fate is against me. Only let me live, and I will promise never to go out of the wood again for prisoners."

"If you intend to keep your word, you may live," answered John; "my only wish is to prevent you from locking up the poor people. Remember, you are not to leave the woods."

After this speech, John returned to his father, and related what he had done. The old man Jack shook his head, and said,—

"You were wrong to trust a giant; but you have done very well, considering the short time you have taken up the profession of giant-killer."

John laughed, and said, "Wait a bit, and see, father; perhaps I have done better than you think."



The giant remembered his promise for a time, but could not rest content for long, and one unlucky morning he took his hatchet, and started out to seek for prisoners.

When he arrived at the outskirts of the wood, where the trees were thin and tall, he found that

each one had been bent over like a bow, and fastened to the ground by the top branches. "Ho! ho!" said the giant, "this is Master John's work; he thinks this will keep me from getting out of the woods; but I can soon cut through such a fence as this."

Slash went his hatchet, and it cut clean through one of the ropes; up sprang the tree, and struck him such a blow on the head, that he was dead in an instant.

The people found his body, and when Jack the Giant Killer heard of it, he knew why his son John had laughed and said, "Wait a bit, and see." Jack gave John his sword to keep for himself; and although Jack the Giant Killer and his son John are both dead years ago, John's great-great-grandson, who is not so very big after all, has the sword to the present day. If there were any giants living now, I have no doubt it would be useful.



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